

MIDDLE YEARS' TEACHER PRACTICES  
AND ATTITUDES IN  
THE TEACHING OF POETRY

BY

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**MIDDLE YEARS' TEACHER PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES**  
**IN THE TEACHING OF POETRY**

**BY**

**DEBRA L. ABRAHAM-RADI**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University**  
**of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**  
**of**  
**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**Debra L. Abraham-Radi 1997 (c)**

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## ABSTRACT

This descriptive survey research study polled the opinions of approximately 100 Middle Years teachers (grades 5 - 8) who teach English Language Arts in the English and French Immersion programs in a relatively small suburban school division. The explicit purpose of the survey was to discover these teachers' behaviors, beliefs and intentions with respect to the teaching of poetry. Teachers were asked to determine the extent to which they believed their role in the examination of poetry to be one of six approaches; 1) interpreter of poetry, 2) facilitator of the process, 3) poetry guide, 4) small group organizer, 5) negotiated teacher and student discussion, and 6) strategic instructor.

The analysis of the data revealed the following findings:

1) English instruction teachers were less likely to use the teacher-centred/individual approaches. Yet, these methods were supported by over half of teachers. English instruction teachers tended to place more emphasis on the students being at the centre of the instruction.

2) French Immersion teachers preferred methods that were group-centred. Strategy instruction was also favoured by these teachers. French Immersion teachers agreed with English teachers in being less willing to use teacher telling as a method in their classrooms.

3) Teachers surveyed didn't know or couldn't articulate what it was that they did in their classroom for poetry instruction as they could not discriminate between the methods presented.

4) Teachers identified factors such as student-centred positive feedback, curriculum changes, professional development by way of materials and resource people as elements that would assist change to occur in the classroom programming.

5) In-depth interviews demonstrated that teacher-centred approaches were favored contrary to the survey results which showed them to be out of favour.

The research highlights several implications for classroom teaching.

1) Creating opportunities for student feedback and input in the classroom instruction.

2) Support for classroom teachers to refine and develop their expertise through teacher training, curriculum changes, collegial support, professional development, and time.

3) Teacher training component on best practices needs to be included at the faculties of education.

4) Teachers need to become more familiar with the Provincial English Language Arts curriculum.

5) Teachers need time to research, for professional dialogue and observation to enhance their programs.

6) Time needs to be provided by schools and school divisions to facilitate change occurring.

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It is through the collaborative efforts of these significant people in my academic and personal life that this thesis has been completed. My heartfelt gratitude is extended to all of you.

I Love Poetry But ...

I love reading rhyme and prose,  
but that's as far as my love goes.

I hate it when there's strings attached  
the joy of poems away is snatched.  
with questions analyzing themes,  
of finding rhyme and rhythm schemes.  
I'll read the poems that I like best,  
and not do any stupid test.  
who cares what "synecdoche" is,  
(that's why I failed the L.A. quiz,  
my mind's as solid as a sieve.)  
Do I need that advice to live,  
to get a job and earn my wage,  
to take dictation on a page?  
I think not! So all I say,  
is reading poetry is okay,  
but meanly tearing poems apart  
to look for some deep inner heart  
is purposeless and boring too,  
And I have better things to do.  
I will enjoy the poems I read,  
and not let schoolwork spoil the deed.

- Christiane Fischer -  
Grade 9 - John Pritchard School, Winnipeg

Published as the Pandora Poetry Contest - Second Place Winner in  
Classmate - the Journal of the Manitoba Association of Teachers of  
English - Winter 1995.

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### RESEARCH

Traditionally, many students have had an aversion to poetry because their responses in the classroom were inhibited by the stated or implied expectations of their current teachers or the students' memories of past experiences. For their part, many teachers were reluctant to teach poetry because of "past practice such as forced memorization and recitation, and a selection of poems for classroom study decided largely by anthologists', [and because of the teachers'] didactic and conservative concerns. Neither teachers nor students have expected to understand the "mystique" of poetry without questions to guide them. Students have tended to expect that poetry would make sense only when the teacher intervened either by asking pertinent questions or by providing apt directions and explanations" (Dias, 1985, p. 108). It is little wonder, then, that many students have come to believe that their personal questions about the poems under study had little value in comparison with those on the teacher's agenda.

As a result of the practices of many teachers and the resulting perceptions of their students, many students have had little expectation of being able to make sense of poetry on their own, and

consequently many were unable to function as independent readers of poetry.

In his research James S. Mullican (1992) reports that "too many young people profess to hate poetry. For these young people, poetry consists largely of 'deep meanings' understood only by teachers. Many of these same young people don't like what one of Mullican's students called the 'shredding of poetry' for the purpose of sifting out that last bit of meaning in a poem which is affectionately called 'murder to dissect' by his students" (Mullican, 1992, p. 122).

Other research also demonstrates that students believe that they are unable to read poetry without explicit guidance from their teachers. For example Dias (1992) observes that students typically become dependent on their teachers to mediate and guide their responses to poetry. Bizzaro (1993) makes a similar observation: "Text appropriation seems a natural consequence of conscientious teaching. Teachers have the opportunity - as plumbers might with their apprentices - to say, 'Move over and let me show you how I would do it' " ( p. 65).

Bizzaro's analogy demonstrates the primary consideration that is given to experience by some teachers, who assume that superior

experience makes the expert - practitioner "handier" than the apprentice. Such an assumption further leads to the conviction that beginners merely lack information and once this information is obtained they will be able to perform like their teachers. These many expert - practitioners seem to believe that students will carry the skills learned by observing the teacher into subsequent tasks. As students are "unfamiliar with the 'rules' (if, indeed, any exist), . . . most students willingly relinquish control of their texts to teachers who, if they do not actually know rules, are at least believed by students to possess special information" (Bizzaro, 1993, p. 66).

Because teachers have encouraged this dependence, students do not believe they have the ability to read poetry themselves, and rarely do so after formal schooling. Thus, for most adolescent students, the reading of poetry, unlike the reading of fiction, is seen primarily as a school activity. (Dias, 1985).

Poetry instruction has favored the use of traditional methods using the learning of literary terms, with little or no opportunity for diverse student responses. Teachers have attempted to teach the 'right answer', and students have attempted to give back the 'correct response'. "Such a situation can only lead to students' believing that

the correct version of the work is locked in the mind of the teacher and that it is their job to ferret it out - - most likely by attending to the signals the teacher transmits" (Dias, 1992, p. 135). Theories of literary criticism have affected the teaching of poetry and these suggested practices have often alienated adolescent readers (Dias & Hayhoe, 1988).

In an attempt to go beyond this limiting view of poetry instruction, several authors have explored an alternative response to poetry. One such researcher is Patrick Dias (1988) who encouraged students to explore the meanings of poetry and to examine their own interpretation. Dias and Hayhoe (1988) also developed a Response to Poetry method for classroom instruction. This approach uses strategic teaching geared to assisting both student and teacher to navigate the genre of poetry.

Straw (1990) suggests that in responding to literature we come to know by speaking and interacting orally with others about the material that we are attempting to understand. In order to achieve immediate open responses we need to know what we are discussing. It is easier to respond to a piece of literary text when we have reached a personal understanding of the text through talk both with teachers and with other students to discover what

particular texts "mean" for one another. We need time to reflect upon our responses so that we can explore our understandings and grow in our response to literature.

More recently, research such as that of Denny Wolfe (1992) supports the premise that instruction in poetry must be response-centered if teachers are ever to penetrate the prejudices which students hold toward the genre. He claims that teachers need to establish a process for teaching that guides students towards understanding why poets write poems and the way that readers of poetry read and respond to those poems. Wolfe's approach stresses the need for teachers to create an experience which can stimulate the students' thoughts, feelings, and imagination.

#### MY CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

These theorists have created the underpinnings which have supported the development of my own personal research, by describing methods that encourage students to be autonomous readers of poetry and that also cultivate the processes which support reading for the sake of reading. As a classroom teacher, I was always disappointed when my students reacted negatively to my efforts to introduce poetry to the class. Because I wanted to instill

my love of poetry into my students, I searched for a way to do so. The traditional exercises in the textbooks and reading series were not what I was looking for because, contrary to the opinions implied in the answer keys, I believe there is more than one response to a poem.

Then I came across the Dias model to poetic response. This model inspired me to conduct classroom action research projects which delighted me, as well as my cooperating team teachers and their students. The following is a description of one of the action research projects that examined response to poetry using the Patrick Dias model in a Grade Five classroom in which the Manitoba French Immersion Curriculum is followed. The positive responses from the cooperating teacher and students encouraged me to continue to explore the Response to Poetry method that eventually led to the research for this thesis.

#### INITIAL PROJECT STUDY

In the target classroom, no specifically formal poetry instruction had occurred prior to this research project. The classroom teacher and I worked cooperatively to implement a Response to Poetry project. Generally, students, in grade 5 and 6 in

the school where the project study was done, were apathetic toward poetry lessons and their teachers had been reluctant to teach poetry at all.

I hypothesized that by using the Patrick Dias response-to-poetry models as a guide, the students would be better able to respond personally to poetry.

The project began with students writing down their reactions to poetry. These reactions would create a baseline to determine if their attitudes toward poetry changed over the course of the project. These reactions were written on individual sheets of paper.

Through the use of small group discussions of the poem selections, students began to respond, understand, and, through the articulation of their thoughts, make sense of several poems. The students used poetry response journals to help sort through their thoughts, feelings, and reactions. By using this process, students developed a personal understanding of the poetry that they were discussing.

In the final evaluation, students were asked to respond to what they liked, what they learned and how they could use their ideas. They were also asked to provide other comments. These

responses were compared with the initial survey of the reactions to poetry that students wrote.

In summation, this action research project examined the use of a Patrick Dias's response approach to poetry in a grade 5 classroom where the students found the Response to Poetry approach a memorable and pleasurable experience. In this classroom, this approach to poetry proved to be significant for several reasons. As demonstrated by the statistical analysis, students grew in their ability to respond to poetry. Students also reported an improved attitude towards poetry in their personal evaluations of the project. Through collaborative teaching and the coach's modelling, the cooperating classroom teacher became more confident and comfortable with the instruction of poetry in her classroom, and she continued to use this model as a means of soliciting a response to literature for other texts.

Several factors contributed to the success of the project. The response journals were reviewed every second day for response quality. In addition, the students received written responses in their journals from either one of the cooperative teaching team, and therefore were encouraged further to develop their understandings of the poems to which they were responding. Students also received

daily feedback in the large group, from the classroom teacher and me. We commented on the success of their work and indicated the areas to continue developing. The specific tasks and expectations were made clear to the students and the process was reviewed on a daily basis. Students could easily access the process charts for reference. The fact that these process charts were elicited, for the most part, from the students also provided them with direct ownership for the process reflected in the charts.

Giving students the personal choice as to which poem from a pair that they would respond to also had a positive effect on the response process. Students had some control over selection and this developed some ownership of these poems and their subsequent responses to the poems.

Response journals were completed in class time and not done for homework. Consequently, students had the opportunity to complete responses during this period. In addition, there was no pressure for completion as the period after the poetry lesson was scheduled as a silent reading period and students could take time for responses before beginning to read.

A limitation to this study was that the researcher was the only marker for the pre-test and the post-test and therefore, there

was the possibility of bias. A recommendation for future studies would be to have an independent marker, perhaps another teacher, mark the results as well.

In conclusion, I would use the Patrick Dias model of response to poetry for an action research project again. Consideration of the aforementioned limitation would certainly be necessary, but the method had such a positive effect on the students and their understanding of a response to poetry process that I consider it wholly worthwhile.

In fact, years after the initial project, the students are still asking "When can we do it again?".

Subsequent to this initial action research project, I have conducted five research studies collaborating with teachers and students to develop further and extend the classroom strategies and activities that Dias and Hayhoe (1988) designed. I found that the more student-centered the poetry instruction and the choice of content was, the more engaged the students became in the process. Indeed, the more engaged students were in the process, the more their experiences were enhanced and the more positive were their attitudes toward poetry. Their sense of engagement appeared to begin with the selection of the poem to be studied, to develop throughout

the cooperative response process, and to culminate in the report of the findings at the end of the process (Radi, 1993).

The positive cooperating teacher and student response to my previously conducted action research projects encouraged me to continue to explore Response to Poetry as a method and led to the development of this thesis research. As a result of working with several colleagues and students, I became interested in the following questions: What is the best method to engage students actively and directly in the process of responding to poetry? What is the best method to encourage teachers to explore other methods of poetry instruction that would actively engage students directly in the process of responding to poetry? To explore these research questions, I wanted to focus on poetry instruction specifically because of my classroom experiences I believed that the use of response to literature techniques in poetry instruction were under-represented in many Middle Years Language Arts classrooms. In addition, I was also curious about which approaches would assist teachers to change their current practice thus encouraging them to adopt new methods that might direct their teaching practices towards a student-centered approach. Finally, I was curious to see who or what had the most influence on the change in the teachers.

## PURPOSES OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This descriptive survey research study polled the opinions of some teachers with the explicit purpose of discovering these teachers' behaviors, beliefs and intentions with respect to the teaching of poetry. The research focused on Middle Years teacher practice to determine how these teachers taught poetry and what theoretical understanding drove their teaching practice. The study's principal research question was: *What is it that teachers do to teach poetry?* The sub-question then was: *Why do teachers teach poetry as they do?*

Through the use of survey research, this study attempted to determine the extent to which the teachers in the study believed their role in the examination of poetry to be one of the following six approaches:

- 1) Interpreter of poetry for students: [Survey question: 4a) Teacher tells the students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning],
- 2) Facilitator of the process: [Survey question: 4b) Students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves],
- 3) Poetry guide: [Survey question: 4c) Students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher.],

- 4) Small group organizer: [Survey question: d) Students reading, discussing, and interpreting in small groups],
- 5) Negotiated teacher and student discussion: [Survey question: 4e) Teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry],
- 6) Strategic instructor: [Survey question: 4f) Strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.]

This study also explored the extent to which teachers were able to select, from the variety of poetry response techniques presented in the survey, the method(s) appropriate for their classrooms. It explored the teachers' perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limited their ability to alter their current poetry teaching practices.

#### SIGNIFICANCE AND UNIQUENESS OF THE STUDY

This research study is significant as it examined what Middle Years teachers did in their classrooms to teach poetry. In the literature there are numerous examples of teacher activities designed to engage students in the study of poetry. It seems, however, that there are few research studies that examine what

teachers do to engage students in the exploration of poetry in their classrooms. This research study went beyond the mere examination of teacher activities and explored what methods teachers choose to use in their classrooms and to what extent they engaged students in the decision making process of methods used in the classroom.

In particular, this study used survey research to investigate current teacher practices in poetry instruction at the Middle Years level. The research study also explored the theoretical and pedagogical strategies that were used to teach poetry in approximately eighty Middle Years classrooms. The examination of teachers' instructional methods was done in an attempt to gain insight into what theoretical models teachers employed in poetry instruction with their students. It was hoped that an outcome of this study might be that teachers' professional curiosity about alternative methods would be sparked and the teachers' repertoire of possible instructional strategies would be expanded. The study attempted also to explore the teachers' attitudes towards poetry through an examination of how they remembered learning poetry as students in their Middle Years/Junior High classes. The goal, therefore, was to examine what methods were currently used in Middle Years classrooms with the aspiration of assisting teachers to

understand and reflect on their teaching practice with a view to changing how they teach poetry in their classrooms.

The uniqueness of the research derived from its emphasis on current teacher practice in the Middle Years classroom, and the connection between that practice and the development of new practices in the classroom. It was hoped that an off-shoot of the study would be that the teachers in the study would be encouraged to first reflect on their current practices, then consider alternative methods, and finally incorporate these methods into their classroom teaching. Thus by exploring the methods that teachers could use to change the way that they teach poetry, as well as by noting the barriers that impede this change, both researcher and research subjects could benefit.

#### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research study included approximately 100 Middle Years teachers (Grade 5 - 8) who teach English Language Arts in the English and French Immersion programs in a relatively small, suburban school division of approximately 500 Kindergarten to Grade Twelve teachers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The school population included a wide range of students from lower to middle to

upper class homes. The school division had one French Immersion center and six dual-track schools which incorporated both French Immersion and English instruction programs. In the six dual-track schools, approximately 2/3 of the school population were in English programs and 1/3 were in French Immersion programs.

As background information to the study, data on the current teaching grade level, the program of instruction (either English Language Arts or French Immersion English Language Arts), and the number of years of teaching experience of the Middle Years/Junior High - grade 5 to 8 teachers were collected and analyzed.

This descriptive survey research study polled the opinions of teachers with the explicit purpose of discovering teachers' behaviors, beliefs and intentions with respect to the teaching of poetry. The study collected data on the methods Middle Years teachers currently used in teaching poetry to their students and what theoretical understandings drove their teaching practice. Data were also collected on how teachers remembered learning poetry in both their own Middle Years/Junior High experience and how specifically they were taught to teach poetry in their teacher training. The aspect of change was integrated into the questionnaire to determine if the teachers had changed the practices they used in

poetry instruction and what had encouraged this change to occur. A question was also included in this section to determine how, if teachers thought about changing, might they go about making this change.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher considered several limitations in the proposed research with teachers: The first limitation was time: Could the teachers respond to the survey and participate in the interviews in the time they had? The second limitation involved trust: Would teachers respond frankly to the survey and in the follow-up interview that examined their specific teaching practice?

In addition, the small number of teachers (approximately 100) in the selected metro school division who taught English Language Arts and French Immersion English Language Arts, limited the number of potential responses. In addition, this school division is in a suburban area where there have been a limited number of teaching positions available in the last few years. Therefore, the range of teaching experience available was narrow, with few, if any, less experienced teachers available to respond to the survey.

Another limitation of this study was the difficulty in drawing general conclusions. First, the research subjects were selected

from a relatively small sample population extracted from the total school division population. Also, as those surveyed were to respond at their convenience, consideration needed to be given to the time of year that the survey was conducted, the time that the survey response required, and the time needed for the interviews. Consideration was also given to the time of day at which the subjects responded and to their surroundings. The situation under which the respondents answered the survey questions could not be controlled by the researcher. Last, the nature of survey research and the questions posed to collect the data needed to be considered.

Finally, the type of topic this research lent itself to a very pedantic or "preachy" presentation, and the researcher had to guard against such an attitude in presenting the findings of the study.

#### DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF TERMS

For the purposes of this research study, terms are defined as follows:

**Middle Years** - Osborne (1984) states that the term describes a particular period in youngsters' lives, usually that between approximately ten or eleven and fourteen or fifteen years of age. Middle Years philosophy emphasizes that what is important is the

interaction that occurs between teachers and students and among students themselves.

**Response to Literature** - Bryant and Lee (1990) argue that this approach to literature instruction assumes that each reader creates a text's meaning as she or he interacts with it. (The approach rejects the notion that meaning resides solely in the text or that there is a single or correct interpretation for each text). It is the reader's experience of the text that becomes the focus of the teaching and the goal is one of helping students to become sensitive, discerning, critical, and confident readers.

Hynds (1990) refers to response to literature as readers' constantly reformulating their own personal values and identity systems through their encounters with and transformation of literary works. Thus, no two experiences with a text are ever the same, even for the same reader.

poetry - Nancy. Cecil (1994) describes a poem as . . .

- a mirror in which the poet sees himself or herself
- a stream of consciousness woven together from a million half-remembered memories
- a song in which the poet furnishes his or her own tune

- a riddle asked by the poet who isn't there to tell the answer, doesn't know the answer, or doesn't care about the answer
- the poet's most intimate thoughts masqueraded, which only those who care about him or her recognize
- a garden of words that can be planted in neat rows, but then again, can grow wild and free
- a thought, an experience, a reflection, a mood, a color, an observation, an idea, a picture, or a question set in a design of words

### **Approaches to Poetry Instruction:**

#### **A. Teacher-centred Individual**

Telling - the teacher tells students how to read/interpret a poem based on the teacher's or the textbook's interpretation of the meaning. Students carry out subsequent interpretations on their own using the teacher's interpretation as a model.

Strategy Instruction - the teacher directly teaches strategies for reading and interpreting a poem. Students carry out subsequent interpretation on their own ideally employing the strategies taught by the teacher.

#### **B. Teacher-centred Group**

Experiencing - students experience the reading and interpretation of a poem while led by the teacher. Subsequently, students carry out interpretation with group settings.

Joint Discussion - teacher and student jointly discuss the process for reading and interpretation of a poem. Subsequently, students carry out interpretations based on the joint discussion model, either by themselves or with another student.

C. Student-centred Individual

Experimenting - each student experiments with reading/interpreting a poem. Subsequently, the student uses the experimentation as a model for interpreting poetry.

D. Student-centred Group

Small Group - students in small groups read, discuss and interpret a poem. Subsequently, students either interpret poetry with a real group or with an imagined, idealized group.

## CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of literature related to Response to Literature, as well as teachers' methods and practices in the instruction of poetry. The first section examines teachers' methods of poetry instruction to determine what methods and resources guide teachers' practices. The second explores Response to Poetry as the starting point for poetry instruction. The final section considers one specific strategy in poetry instruction that incorporates Response to Poetry strategies with student-centered methods for teaching poetry.

### TEACHER METHODS IN POETRY INSTRUCTION

This section examines teachers' methods of poetry instruction to determine what methods and resources would be helpful to guide teachers' practices and strategies in the classroom. An exploration of classroom teachers' experiences with poetry is also an integral aspect in the current research in this area and will be discussed.

Amann (1986) states that there is a lack of empirical research on the teaching of poetry. The majority of research reflects anecdotal comments and practical teaching tips rather than a theoretical base for the teaching of poetry. She found that the

writing and research on the teaching of poetry encompasses definitions, references to poetry, teaching methods, poetic forms, experimental research and an examination of the benefits of poetry. These detailed reports of teachers' experiences in their own classrooms while they may increase the knowledge of poetic instruction, may not advance the practice of teaching poetry. Amann states that through the spread of ideas, a host of methods, each with its own labels and terminology will appear, but in fact there are only a few basic methods. She concludes with a call for more empirical research to be conducted to advance the teaching of poetry.

In exploring aesthetic responses to poetry, Anderson (1989) cites Rosenblatt's (1978) theory that aesthetic response is concerned with the holistic approach of the experience including content and form during the reading. Students need opportunities to understand or comprehend a text before they can make a literary judgment about it. Anderson questions whether all students need to arrive at a consensus interpretation of the meaning of a literary work. He diverges from Rosenblatt's views, however, when he states that response becomes more acute in non-narrative poetry. He proposes that if individual students respond in diverse and separate ways from each other, then they will not be able to "understand" the

work without the teachers' help as the underlying belief by the teacher is that the students do not have the skills to comprehend the work in the first place. Interestingly though, when the students in Anderson's study were given questions, they favored those questions that the teachers thought were too difficult for them; yet when they were given the choice, they chose these questions as the most critical ones to explore.

Anderson concludes that students are taught that they can never read aesthetically or respond to poetry because there is always something they do not understand, something beyond their comprehension. Poems, however, are moments of aesthetic experience as well as communications of thoughts and ideas that Anderson (1989) believes teachers need to design instructional situations which allow students to consider form as well as content, image and emotion as well as thought and intellect. Aesthetic reading usually happens in spite of the school environment.

Duke (1990) suggests that bringing personal values and experiences to poetry is an important way for students to discover the meaning of a poem. Duke supports the idea that teachers need to provide students with teaching and learning approaches to poetry

that enable students to discover the meaning of a poem without unnecessary intervention from the teacher.

Shapiro (1983) examined suggested poetry teaching procedures found in the teacher manuals of sixth-grade basal readers. She examined 106 poetry lessons in eight teacher manuals. Her findings indicate that the stated objectives stress a one-dimensional, mechanistic view of poetry instruction. They focus on cognitive rather than affective responses to poetry with an emphasis on the comprehension of form rather than on the apprehension of content. For the most part, the poetry instruction in the sixth grade basal manuals consisted of a superficial examination of poetic text, language, and form rather than an exploration of feelings, thoughts, and ideas.

Cecil (1994) suggests curricular reform to meet the needs of the student. In her opinion, learning should emanate from the interests of the learner and the learner's own experiences and ideas. She suggests that launching the study of poetry begins by making poetry joyful and non-threatening and by transforming the classroom into an environment that fosters the enjoyment of poetry. Beyond the initial enjoyment of poetry, Cecil recommends that teachers use what she calls 'literacy scaffolds', as a teaching strategy, to explore

and guide poetry instruction with students. Literacy scaffolds can be used to assist students in reading, comprehending, and responding to poems. Using the anthology that Cecil provides in her text, teachers are encouraged to begin with an appreciation of poetry. "Literacy scaffolds, which are simply temporary writing frameworks or models for writing . . . enable children to achieve success with poetry." (Cecil, 1994, p. 7)

#### RESPONSE TO POETRY

This section explores Response to Poetry literature as the starting point for the instruction of poetry. However, in the area of Response to Poetry, there is a relatively limited amount of empirical research. The type of activities that are reported are, as Amann (1986) states, teachers' experiences in their own classrooms.

Due to limited empirical research in the area of poetry instruction, especially in relation to Response to Poetry, the Dias model of response to poetry seems to be a reasonable starting point for this type of exploration.

Dias (1985) suggests that most published research on response to literature focuses on the results of the analyses of these responses. He states that using specific procedures - a small

group discussion phase, journal writing, and the responding aloud protocol phase - as a response process, one may see how students make sense of poems. Dias argues that using this procedure helps students to articulate their developing response at length and that the preparatory small group discussion phase ensures success in the response process.

Dias (1986) explains a step-by-step the procedure for the response to poetry that occurs as students become more involved in the group process. He values teachers becoming their own researchers in the classroom and explains the procedure in explicit detail as well as an analysis of the process. According to Dias, group discussion procedures ensure that pupils will respond to the meaning and that articulating their thoughts and feelings is an important part in making sense of the poem.

In his article, "Researching Response to Poetry - Part I: A Case for Responding - Aloud Protocols", Dias (1985), looks at the Responding Aloud Protocols (RAPS) in relation to a method of responding to literary form. This article contends that students respond in various individual patterns of response namely as "problem solvers, allegorizers, thematizers, and paraphrasers" (p. 216 - 218). These are not meant to be all-inclusive and can be seen as cross-

categorical. Individual patterns of response can be identified and tracked in the response protocols.

Bryant (1984) examined the Dias process of responding to poetry in a Grade 12 classroom. She supports this process stating that by using the Dias model, students talk, and their talk is purposeful and collaborative. (Bryant,1984).

Research conducted by Straw (1989) found that "the data suggested that teachers can improve students' reading of poetry by allowing them, in group settings, to discover the meanings in poetry with their peers and then by having them explore the meaning possibilities through joint writing" (p.199). Straw further suggests that the teacher change roles from imparter of knowledge to facilitator of meaning by allowing students to explore possible meaning, to compare and to discuss their responses.

Cariello (1990) explores the role of poetry in the elementary classroom and suggests a response technique to expand students' thoughts about poetic response. His ideas become relevant to the Middle Years classroom since upper elementary - grades 5 and 6 are considered to be Middle Years. He suggests that the study of poetry should be expansive and inclusive encouraging classroom teachers to relinquish their own textual authority by using questions to

stimulate students' exploration. He states that teachers need to achieve a balance between direction and freedom. The key for Cariello is helping children to make connections so that they can be attracted to poetry. Cariello feels that by doing so, teachers will achieve transaction as Rosenblatt describes it.

In 'Poetry in the Springtime', Norris (1985) provides a personal response model to poetry as he ponders learning and the relationship of literature to life. He leads the reader through his own response processes as he reflects, ponders, articulates, restates, and explores his personal understanding of many poetic texts. The reader has a clear sense of how poetic response has developed for Norris. This article has the flavour of a personal reflection of a read-aloud protocol that Dias supports. In reading Norris one can follow his path of understanding of the text and its many interpretations and implications. The article provides us with an interesting developmental process from one individual as he reflects on his personal experience.

Langer (1995) suggests how personal response develops by describing four stances that readers work through when building envisionments, or when developing their 'world of understanding'. These stances are: 1) *being out of and stepping into an envisionment*,

or using prior knowledge to interpret new ideas and to sort out confusion; 2) *being in and moving through an envisionment*, or making meaning from a possible resource; 3) *stepping out and rethinking what one knows*, or adding to prior knowledge; and 4) *stepping out and objectifying the experience*, or evaluating and reflecting on a writer's craft.

Envisionment-building encourages students to be thoughtful, to be aware of, and involved in the process established by the four guiding principles of envisionment-building. According to these principles, "students are treated as lifelong envisionment builders . . . questions are treated as part of the literary experience, . . . class meetings are a time to develop understandings, . . . and multiple perspectives are used to enrich interpretation" (pp. 57 - 59). Langer believes that the goal of envisionment-building is to create a classroom culture where literature study not only raises but grows out of issues involving ethics, civics, social responsibility, cultural identity, aesthetics, and reasoning. Students need to think about such issues as they relate not only to themselves but also to others.

As students share their envisionments, multiple perspectives enter the classroom, allowing students to explore new horizons, and consequently, enter the realm of "literary thinking." To demonstrate

this concept in action Langer utilizes classroom narratives from middle school literature discussions and think-alouds.

From our understanding of response, six approaches to the teaching of poetry may be inferred by examining the theory that underpins each of these approaches.

The first approach is *interpreter of poetry for students* or the teacher telling the students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

Barnes (1990) describes how the teacher telling students method is a teacher-centred, individual approach to poetry instruction. According to Barnes, "presentational talk" occurs in classrooms "when students are called on in class, . . . they feel to be under evaluation they seldom risk exploration, but prefer to provide an acceptable performance, a "right" answer. The students motivation is guided by the need to satisfy the teacher and to demonstrate that they could perform as required. The teacher, then, takes the view "that it is for the reader to construct a meaning for a poem, and that, consequently, his role as teacher was to guide and encourage this by questioning". (p. 51)

The second approach is *facilitator of the process*, or students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.

Bell (1988) focuses on children talking and teachers learning which supports a student-centred, individual approach to poetry instruction. He describes a method which "encourages enjoyment of reading poetry by trusting poems to work without too much teacher 'direction' and trusting readers to sort out their own responses" (p.88). Students, in his view, need to be "encouraged to read lots of poems for the pleasure they afford, thereby generating genuine enthusiasm" (p. 88). By "providing time and space to respond to, and reflect on, the imaginative experience generated by a poet's words, can create the climate: trusting the reader and trusting the poem can create the opportunity" (p. 88).

The third approach is *poetry guide*, or students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher. Gambell (1993) overviews a teacher-centred, group approach to the instruction of poetry that supports students reflecting on their own process, and recognizing that various influences are at work (both within and without the text) shaping their perceptual strategies. He "suggests that realizations about the text may come about in two ways. One of those ways is the sharing of meaning among readers of

the same text, which is what happens when student/readers share their individual response to a text in open discussion. The other occurs when teachers posit a particular way of approaching the text, such as when they ask students to re-examine the text in light of its narrative structure, characterization, symbolism, imagery, or use of language. Both types of influences are outside the text, and both shape the strategies and meaning of readers" (p. 32).

The fourth approach is *small group organizer* or students reading, discussing, and interpreting in small groups.

Dias (1990) describes a student-centred group approach to the instruction of poetry that suggests "teachers shed their roles as expert interpreters and become interested listeners of the interpretations of others". In his view, "comprehension should be exercised as a means towards . . . a point where strategies and the degree of understanding necessary are determined by the reader's focus and intention and not by seemingly arbitrary preset questions". He maintains that "much more reading and discussion of reading should occur within small groups and in the pursuit of ends that the groups have appropriated for themselves". (p.297)

Straw (1990) suggests that in responding to literature we come to know by speaking and interacting orally with others about

the material that we are attempting to understand. In order to achieve immediate open responses we need to 'know' what we are discussing. It is easier to respond to a piece of literary text when we have reached a personal understanding of the text through talk both with teachers and with other students to discover what particular texts "mean" for one another. We need time to reflect upon our responses so that we can explore our understandings and grow in our response to literature.

Using a student-centred group approach concurs with my own personal research into this specific strategy in poetry instruction that encompassed aspects of the response to poetry method with the goal of re-orienting teacher practice to incorporate student-centered practices into poetry instruction. Dias and Hayhoe (1988) provided the theoretical underpinnings to construct practical methods that could be incorporated into classroom practice to develop autonomous student readers of poetry and cultivate the processes that support aesthetic reading in the development of a response to poetry protocol with students.

This approach had such a positive effect on the students and their understanding of a response to poetry process as I found that the more student-centered the poetry instruction and the choice of

content was, the more engaged the students became in the process. I discovered this to be true beginning with the selection process of the poem to be studied, to the manipulation of the poem through the use of a cooperative response process where the students were responsible for their individual and group interpretation and reporting of the findings at the end of the process. I found that the more engaged the students were in this process, the more that their experience was enhanced and contributed towards the development of positive attitudes towards poetry. (Radi, 1993)

The fifth approach is *negotiated teacher and student discussion* or teacher and student joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry.

Benton (1988) overviews one of the divisions in reader response that focuses on a teacher-centred group, approach to the instruction of poetry which offers a "perspective on the . . . values of reading literature by asserting the importance of the individual's 'reading' of a text." (p. 13) "The responsibility for making meaning lies with the reader; the teaching/learning emphasis shifts away from critical authority and received knowledge residing in the teacher towards the development of personal responses, their refinement through sharing these responses with others (including

teachers), and their evaluation through the community of the classroom". (p. 13)

The sixth approach is *strategic instructor* or strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

Beach and Marshall (1990) examine the reading and interpretation of literature as a structured opportunity for the focus on a teacher-centred individual approach to the instruction of poetry. "The teacher's responsibility in this model is not to put knowledge into the students, nor to displace the knowledge and skills students already possess. The teacher's responsibility, rather, is to build upon students' efforts, recasting and expanding upon them without rejecting what they have accomplished on their own". (p. 39) The challenge for teachers is "to help students elaborate upon and perhaps revise their initial interpretations without rejecting those interpretations as out of hand" (p. 39), in essence to teach them strategies with which to read and interpret poetry building on their own understandings and experiences.

Cecil (1994) recommends that teachers use what she calls 'literacy scaffolds', as a teaching strategy, to explore and guide poetry instruction with students. Literacy scaffolds can be used to

assist students in reading, comprehending, and responding to poems. Using the anthology that Cecil provides in her text, teachers are encouraged to begin with an appreciation of poetry. "Literacy scaffolds, which are simply temporary writing frameworks or models for writing . . . enable children to achieve success with poetry." (Cecil, 1994, p. 7)

As demonstrated there is theoretical, anecdotal support for all six methodologies. No theoretical model has been conceptualized and validated such that there is consistent evidence of one method being superior to another. A number of authors (Dias, Hayhoe, Straw, etc.) argue that from teacher-centred, individual models of instruction to more student-centred group models, and there is some evidence that these are more effective. But there are still proponents of strategic instruction at best guided instruction.

## CHAPTER 3 - DESIGNS and PROCEDURES

### INTRODUCTION

This research study employed a descriptive survey method to poll the opinions of teachers with the explicit purpose of discovering teachers' behaviors, beliefs and intentions regarding their teaching of poetry. The study was designed to collect data on what methods Middle Years teachers used in teaching poetry to their students and what theoretical understandings drove their teaching practice. Data were also collected on teachers' memories of learning poetry in their own Middle Years/Junior High experience and on what they were specifically taught in their teacher training about teaching poetry. The questionnaire also determined if teachers had changed and if so, what had encouraged this change. A question was designed in this section to determine if teachers thought about changing how might they go about making this change.

### PILOT STUDY

Prior to the actual study (see Appendix A for the original survey), a pilot study of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) determined the feasibility of the research survey and the need to

eliminate any problems in the questionnaire prior to the actual research.

The pilot study population was drawn from ten Middle Years educators who taught in urban and suburban schools similar to the English Language Arts and French Immersion English Language Arts teachers in the target school division. Feedback was received from 80% of those surveyed.

In the pilot study, the following procedures elicited feedback from the study respondents and assisted the researcher in making changes to the questionnaire: In providing information about the survey itself, pilot study respondents completed the survey as if they were Middle Years teachers. Their experience provided the researcher with the opportunity to solicit and gather formative evaluation information from the pilot study population. From the pilot study, the researcher learned the respondents' point of view on analysis and interpretation of poetry, as well as on teaching poetry. The respondents' perceptions of problems with the survey were highlighted by direct questioning about how long it took the respondents to complete the survey, whether there were any questions that were unclear, and finally whether there were any areas in which the respondents would suggest changes.

Based on the information derived from the pilot study results, the researcher revised the questions in the questionnaire. The ordering of the questions in the questionnaire was also revised to reflect a logical sequence. As a result of respondents' feedback regarding the length of time required to complete the survey, the researcher altered the time required in the overview information that was sent to survey participants. The revised survey was sent to the Middle Years teachers in the target school division (see Appendix C) and the research design plan was revised to reflect the ideas given by the pilot study respondents (see Appendix D).

## PROCEDURES

The method for the survey research included both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained by the completion of a questionnaire administered to all of the Middle Years teachers who teach English Language Arts in English and in French Immersion programs in the division. The survey was intended to provide a broad-based study of teachers' attitudes and knowledge in the area of poetry instruction.

Seven of the survey respondents were selected to participate in in-depth interviews. Teachers were selected based on whether

they preferred one of the following six teaching approaches to the instruction of poetry:

1) **teacher telling** the students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning, 2) **students' experimenting** with reading/interpreting the poem themselves, 3) **students' experiencing** the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher, 4) students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in **small groups**, 5) teacher and student **jointly discussing** the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry, 6) **strategy instruction** teacher directly teaching the students strategies to read & interpret poetry. In addition, one teacher who had never taught poetry was selected to be interviewed as an example of a novice's approach to poetry. Results from the survey provided information for structured interview questions designed to reveal the teachers' further knowledge on the instruction of poetry in their classrooms, and thus provide additional qualitative data.

Interview subjects included teachers of different grade levels, programs (English program or French Immersion program), numbers of years of teaching experience, and approaches to the instruction of poetry as identified in the questionnaire. Several practice

interviews were conducted by the researcher to develop probing interview techniques and initial questions. Follow-up questions were also developed to provide an opportunity for the interviewer to clarify and further discuss areas initially raised by the interviewees.

The interview sessions were approximately 20-30 minutes in length and followed the interview protocol (see Appendix G). All of the interview sessions were taped, transcribed to facilitate the analysis of data and to allow the researcher to focus on the interview process with the interviewee. In the interview sessions, participants were provided with a copy of their questionnaire responses in order to refresh their memory about their responses. In order to illuminate the questionnaire responses and to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching methods that teachers used in poetry instruction, the researcher asked clarification questions (see Appendix G) directly related to the responses that the respondents gave on their questionnaires.

Standard questions were developed as part of an interview protocol and were used in all of the interviews (See Appendix G). Probing techniques were used to maintain the focus of the interview questions, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of what the

teachers did when they taught poetry and of the theoretical underpinnings of their practices in poetry instruction. The interviews were conducted on an individual basis in a school-based location to provide a neutral, relaxed, and professional atmosphere for the interview (see Appendix H for interview transcripts).

### ANALYSIS

The survey results were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to determine how many of the respondents answered questions in each category. Qualitative analysis was used to report the data that were based on a more open-ended examination in nature and which required an extended response.

From the surveys that were returned, the data were analyzed to reflect how many and what percentage of the respondents were teaching at which **grade level**.

Frequency of response was noted for teachers who taught English Language Arts in either the English program or the French Immersion **program**. Comparisons were statistically generated to determine which methods of poetry instruction were preferred by English and by French Immersion English Language Arts teachers.

These comparisons helped to determine whether there were differences between methods used in each program.

The **number of years of teaching experience** was analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between length of teaching experience and methods used. Ultimately these data were not reported.

A question was designed to determine **whether teachers taught poetry** as part of their Language Arts program and **how much time** teachers allocated to this activity. Results were collected and analyzed to determine the amount of time that teachers spent on poetry instruction and specifically, whether teachers taught much (> 10 hours/cycle), some (0 -10 hrs/cycle) and no (0 hrs/cycle) poetry as part of their Language Arts program. The researcher wanted to determine whether the amount of instructional time spent on poetry would have had an influence on the approach that the teachers used. Ultimately these data were not reported.

Descriptive analysis was used to determine **when teachers taught poetry** and what was the **major method** that they preferred to use. Teachers were also asked about: **approach**: whether poetry was part of a separate unit; part of an integrated theme unit; taught as a genre; or taught as a focus within another

unit. The researcher wanted to determine whether poetry was integrated into the teachers' classroom program or was viewed as a segregated unit or whether the teacher used a combination of integration and segregation.

Results were also gathered to determine whether these approaches to teaching poetry were **different from, or the same as**, those that teachers used for any **other genre** in their Language Arts program. Ultimately, these data were not reported.

Teachers were then asked for their opinion on **how students read/interpret poetry best**. They were encouraged to indicate all methods that applied to their own teaching situation. Data were analyzed reflecting six methods that the respondents selected:

- a) The teacher tells students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning.
- b) Students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.
- c) Students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher.
- d) Students read, discuss, and interpret the poem in small groups.

e) Teacher and student jointly discuss the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

f) Strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry.

For each method, survey data were analyzed to make comparisons. Each teaching method was cross-matched with another in order to determine which methods teachers believed assisted students in reading/interpreting poetry best.

In determining the role that poetry has in teachers' Language Arts programs, qualitative data were gathered for analysis in various categories such as - art form; specifically **appreciation**, including expressive sub-categories. **Curriculum** formed another category with the sub-categories of supplemental curriculum, major unit, separate unit/literary genre, integrated unit, thematic unit, student-centered focus. In addition, results were compiled in the area of **not applicable** (n/a) to determine teacher response patterns.

Teachers were asked to reflect on their own Middle Years/Junior High education, and to respond to **how they remembered learning poetry**. Responses were categorized and reported in the following categories: teacher led, experimenting

(sight), experiencing, small group, discussion, strategy instruction, and memorization. In this instance, the n/a category recorded such responses as n/a, "don't remember", and "boring". Ultimately these data were not reported.

In examining teacher's practices, a question was designed to determine if **in their teacher training, teachers were specifically taught how to teach poetry**. Categorical analysis was used to reflect these responses. If teachers were, in fact, taught how to teach poetry, they were asked to respond to what methods were suggested for teaching poetry. Respondents chose from the following categories: teacher led, experimenting (sight), experiencing, small group, discussion, strategy, memorization and an n/a category. Ultimately these data were not reported.

To examine whether any changes had taken place since teachers began teaching, the respondents were queried on whether their **approach to teaching poetry had changed** since they began teaching. If teachers had changed they were asked to reflect on how they would account for this change. These results were qualitatively reported using the following categories to group the responses: curriculum, student-centered, experience, professional development, and n/a.

Teachers were asked whether they were **generally pleased with the way that they taught poetry**. Their responses were categorized. Teachers were further asked to explain their answer. Qualitative data were compiled in the categories of: time and resources, experience, curriculum/methodology, professional development, student-centered approach and also the category of n/a. Results were clustered according to the following responses:

1) for the most part, 2) sometimes, and 3) not always. To understand teachers' perspectives further, they were questioned as to whether they thought about **changing the way they taught poetry**, and what they would have liked to change. Results were qualitatively clustered according to curriculum/ method, resources, and time considerations. The responses of the teachers who were pleased and did not indicate that they would like to change were also compiled. N/A responses reflected teachers who had no opinion or had not thought about changing or what they would like to change.

Last, teachers were queried about how they might go about making this change. Qualitative methods were used to analyze these results in the following categories: curriculum/ method, time, resources, professional development, personal reasons, and n/a.

The interview data were qualitatively analyzed to derive

further insights into what teachers do in poetry instruction and the methods that guide their teaching practice. The interviews were taped and the data was reported *verbatim* (see Appendix H), then analyzed for the patterns of commonalities and generalizations in the responses from the teachers.

The data on the following variables: number of years of teaching experience; whether teachers taught poetry and how much time they allocated; whether approaches were different from, or the same as, other genre; how they remembered learning poetry; and if in their teacher training, teachers were specifically taught how to teach poetry; were not reported in the analysis because the researcher focused on the methods in the reporting of the results. These would, however, make an interesting extension to further research.

## CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS

### DESIGN AND OVERVIEW

This chapter includes a description and presentation of the analyses of the data and a discussion of the results. The survey results were analyzed categorically to determine how many of the respondents answered questions in each category. Qualitative analysis was used to report the data from questions that were open-ended in nature and which required an extended response to the survey. Qualitative analysis was also used for the interview data.

Background data on the current teaching level, program of instruction (English or French Immersion), and the number of years of teaching experience of the respondents were collated. Then teachers were asked a series of questions designed to examine the role that poetry played in their Language Arts program. One question determined whether teachers teach poetry as part of their Language Arts program and how much time they allocated to its instruction. They were asked which approach they used, what major method they most preferred in the teaching of poetry, and whether the poetry teaching methods were different from or the same as, those they used for any other genre in their Language Arts program.

The teachers' opinions on how students read/interpret poetry best were sought. Teachers were given a choice of and could respond positively to all of them (i.e. their response to one method did not limit their responses to other methods).

The teachers' methods included:

- 1) The teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning.
- 2) Students' experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.
- 3) Students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher.
- 4) Students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.
- 5) Teacher's and students' jointly discussing the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry.
- 6) Strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies for reading and interpreting poetry.

The teacher respondents were encouraged to indicate all methods that applied to their teaching situation. Surveys were analyzed for all methods and comparisons were made in order to determine which methods teachers believed best assisted students to read/interpret poetry.

To examine teachers' practices, a series of questions was designed to call upon teachers' own experiences to determine whether these had an influence on their current practice. Teachers

were asked to reflect on their own Middle Years/Junior High education and respond to what they remembered about learning poetry. One question determined whether in teacher training, teachers were specifically taught how to teach poetry. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze these responses.

To examine whether any changes have taken place since teachers had begun teaching, the respondents were asked whether their approach to teaching poetry had changed, and how they would account for this change. These results were analyzed and reported.

Teachers were also asked whether they were generally pleased with the way that they taught poetry. Qualitative data reviewed the areas that teachers highlighted as they explained their initial answers further.

One question asked teachers if they had thought about changing the way they taught poetry and what changes they would like to make. These results, including how teachers might go about making a change, were qualitatively clustered.

The interview data were qualitatively analyzed to gain further insights into what the teachers did in poetry instruction and the methods that guided their teaching practice. The interviews were taped, the data were recorded verbatim (see Appendix H) and were analyzed for patterns for commonalities and generalizations in

responses from the teachers. The extent to which teachers were knowledgeable about a) response techniques used in poetry lessons and b) their perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limited their ability to transform their current practice in teaching poetry, were both further explored through the interviews.

Through the data presented, the following principal research question was addressed: What is it that teachers do to teach poetry? The sub-question was: Why do teachers teach poetry as they do?

The survey research asked teachers to identify their use of six approaches to teaching poetry:

- 1) teacher as interpreter of poetry for students
- 2) teacher as facilitator of the process
- 3) teacher as poetry guide
- 4) teacher as small group organizer
- 5) teacher as negotiator in teacher and student discussion
- 6) teacher as strategic instructor.

The seven interviews focused on six questions that clarified the interviewees' responses and gained insight into the practices and processes used in their classrooms. A question was designed to identify the teachers' goals, the impact of those goals on students, and the extent to which the students were involved in classroom

decision-making. A subsequent question, addressing the elements that aided change to occur in the classroom, focused on the element of change and its impact. The final question was open-ended so that aspects of the interviewees' poetry program that had not been previously discussed, and additional observations on poetry instruction could also be examined.

#### CATEGORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

English Language Arts teachers and French Immersion Language Arts teachers were asked for their opinions on how students best read/interpreted poetry . Comparisons were made between teachers' responses to the six method areas, and their language of instruction.

As is displayed below in Table 4.1, 58% of both English instruction and French Immersion teachers agreed that the teacher should tell students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teachers' interpretation or on the instructional text's interpretation of the meaning. This question attempted to discover what percentage of teachers thought that poetry instruction and reading should be teacher directed and presentational in style.

Table 4.1

## Teacher Telling

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| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=36) *        | 21 (58%) | 15 (42%) |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 7 (58%)  | 5 (42%)  |

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## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

a) By having the teacher tell them how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

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\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 36 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 37 in other categories.

As is apparent in Table 4. 2, 92% of English program and 82% of French Immersion program teachers agreed that students should be experimenting with reading and interpreting the poem themselves in their classrooms. This question attempted to address whether or not teachers thought poetry was best taught in a discovery/student-centred individual manner.

Table 4. 2

## Students Experimenting

| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 34 (92%) | 3 (8%)   |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 10 (83%) | 2 (17%)  |

## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

b) By experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.

As shown in Table 4. 3, 86% of English program teachers and 100% of the French Immersion program teachers agreed that students should experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, when the discussion is led by the teacher. All of the French Immersion program teachers agreed that the students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as led by the teacher was their most preferred method of poetry instruction. As well, the English program teachers strongly agreed but not all responded positively to this as a method for poetry instruction. This question attempted to find which mode of instruction teachers thought poetry was best taught with as in an inquiry approach with students being directly involved in the exploration of poetry.

Table 4.3

## Students Experiencing

| Program of Instruction  | Agree     | Disagree |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 32 (86%)  | 5 (14%)  |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 12 (100%) | 0 (0%)   |

## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

c) By students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as led by the teacher.

As demonstrated in Table 4.4, 89% of teachers in the English program and 100% of teachers in the French Immersion program thought that students should read, discuss, and interpret the poem in small groups. Significantly all of the respondents in the French Immersion program agreed that this method was their most preferred method for teaching poetry. In contrast, the English program teachers strongly agreed, but not all positively responded to this as the preferred method of poetry instruction. This question attempted to address whether teachers thought poetry was best taught in a group or social mode with students interacting with their peers.

Table 4. 4

## Students in Small Groups

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| Program of Instruction  | Agree     | Disagree |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 33 (89%)  | 4 (11%)  |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 12 (100%) | 0 (0%)   |

---

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

d) By reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

---

As is displayed in Table 4. 5, 97% of English program teachers and 92% of the teachers in the French Immersion program agreed with teacher and student jointly discussing the reading and interpretation of the poetry. Examination of the data reveals an overwhelming support for the Reading, Discussing and Interpreting in Small Groups method of poetry study. Interestingly, there is little difference in the support shown by teachers in the French Immersion program and those in the English program. This question attempted to address whether teachers thought poetry was best taught using scaffolding<sup>1</sup> as the method of instruction in which teachers and students would jointly discuss the process and interpretation of the poetry.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23 for explanation of term "scaffolding"

Table 4.5

## Teacher &amp; Student Joint Discussion

| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 36 (97%) | 1 (3%)   |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 11 (92%) | 1 (8%)   |

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

e) By teacher and student joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry.

As demonstrated in Table 4.6, 66% of the English program teachers prefer strategy instruction in which the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry, but 91% of the teachers in the French Immersion program agreed with this method of instruction. French Immersion teachers were overwhelming in favour of strategy instruction as a method of poetry instruction whereas their English instruction counterparts were significantly less in favour of this method. This question attempted to address whether teachers thought poetry was best taught using strategic instruction with the teacher being directly instrumental in the teaching and interpretation of the poetry.

Table 4. 6

## Strategy Instruction

| Program of Instruction     | Agree    | Disagree |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=35) *           | 23 (66%) | 12 (34%) |
| French Immersion (N=11) ** | 10 (91%) | 1 (9%)   |

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

f) By strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry.

\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 35 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 37 in other categories.

\*\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 11 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 12 in other categories.

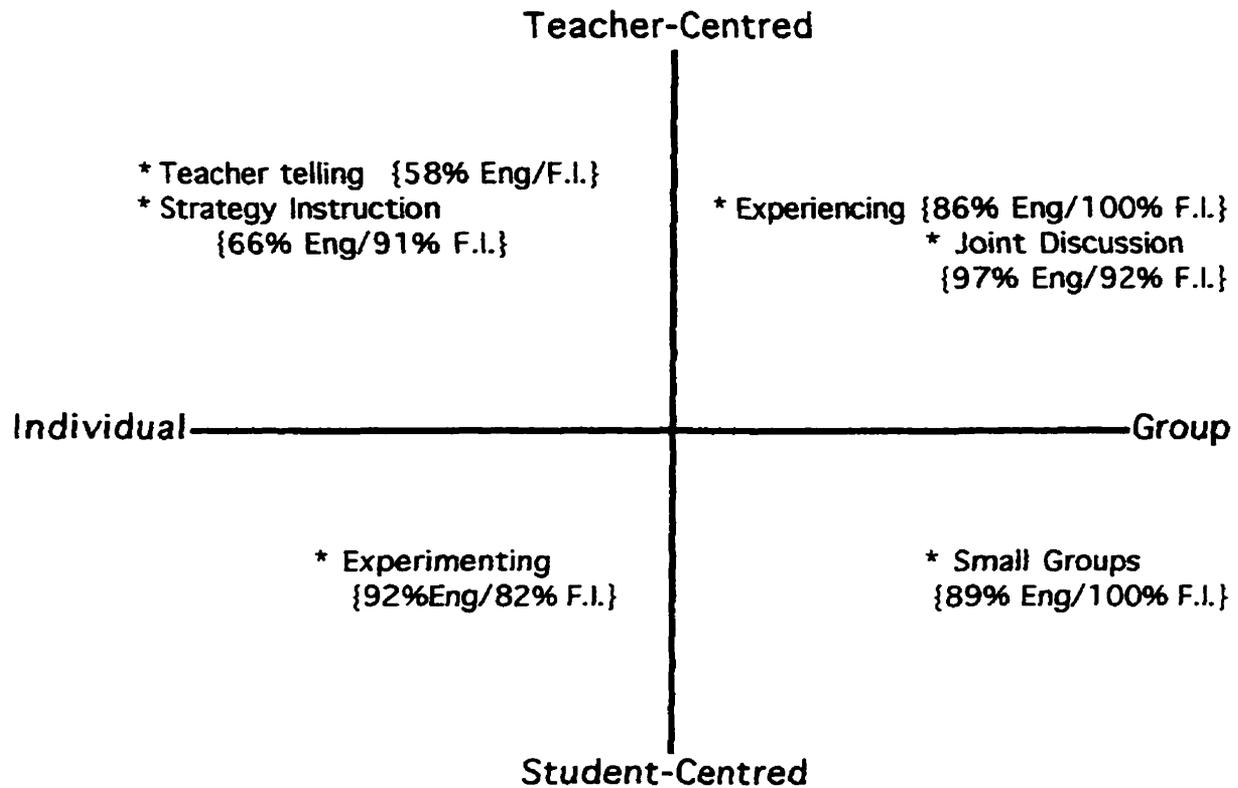
By analysing the six methods that were presented, one may see that respondents teaching in the English program liked the teacher and students' jointly discussing the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry equally as well as the students' experimenting with reading and interpreting the poem themselves. English Instruction teachers also favorably rated small groups and experiencing as favored methods which tend to be small group

oriented but range from teacher-centred in the case of experiencing and student-centred in the case of small group work.

In contrast, the two least preferred methods for English Instruction teachers were 1) the teacher telling students how to read and interpret the poem based on the teachers' or the instructional text's interpretation of the meaning and 2) strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies for reading and interpreting poetry. While English instruction teachers appear to be less likely than the French Immersion teachers, to use teacher-directed/individual methods in their classrooms, these methods still were supported by over half of these teachers. As demonstrated by the data, teachers in the English program of instruction placed more of an emphasis on the students' being at the centre of the instructional practice as the decision makers along with their teachers. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the students. The use of methods which featured the teacher or the text guiding the instruction was less favoured by teachers in the English program of instruction than it was in French programs.

## Summary:

## English Program as compared with French Immersion Program



In the French Immersion program, the most preferred methods of poetry instruction were 1) the students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher and 2) students working in small groups reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem. The next preferred methods were 3) teacher and students' joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry as well as 4) strategy instruction

whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. Last, the least preferred method for French Immersion teachers was the teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning.

Teachers in the French Immersion program tended to encourage students to be at the center of the instructional practice as well as being integral in making decisions with the teacher in the processes that were implemented in the classroom. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the students and student-centred, group work approaches were favoured. The use of methods whereby the teacher or the text solely guided the instruction were less favoured by teachers in the French Immersion program than they were by teachers in the English program.

In both programs, teacher telling was the least popular (though still supported by more than half the sample). Also, in general, teacher-centred, individual response strategies were less supported than group strategies.

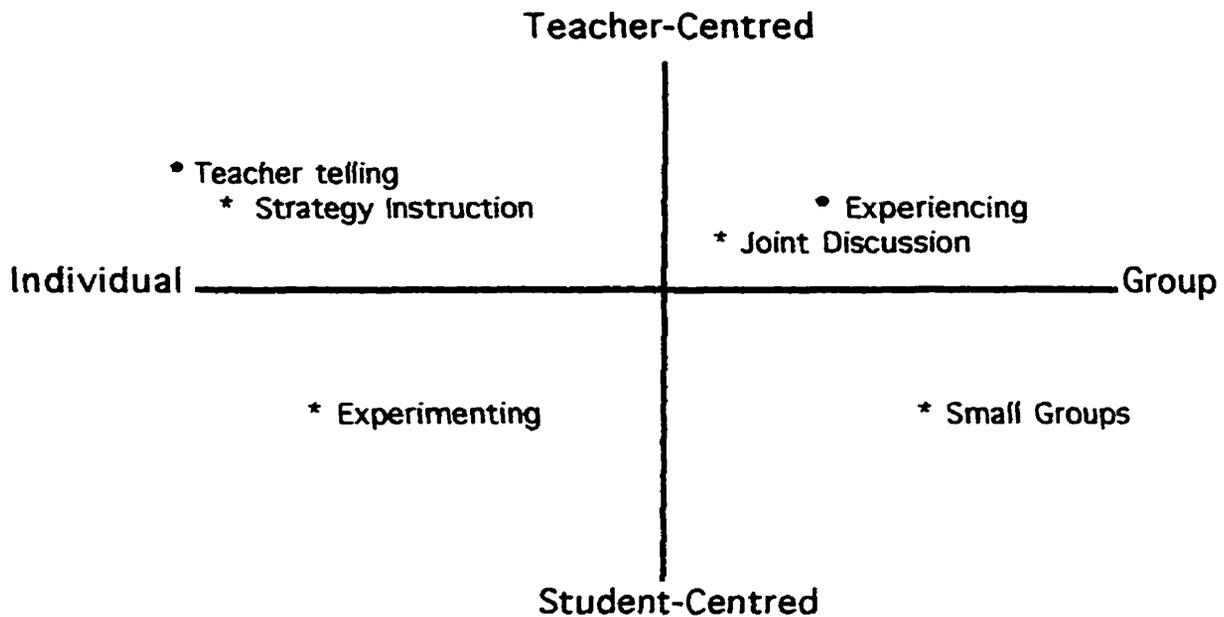
#### COMPARISONS OF POETRY TEACHING METHODS

To gain a clearer understanding of which instructional methods teachers used in their classrooms when teaching poetry,

comparisons among the six described methods of teaching poetry were made. The goal of comparing these various methods of poetry instruction was to determine which method teachers most used in their classrooms. The choices of methods of poetry instruction were cross-referenced.

The following rubric places each of the poetry teaching methods surveyed on a continuum according to whether they were teacher-centred or student-centred, and whether they were individual or group approaches. Each method has been placed in the specific quadrant of which they are most representative. Two approaches to poetry that are individual oriented as well as teacher-centred are 1) teacher telling and 2) strategy instruction. Teacher-centred approaches with an orientation toward group work are illustrated by 1) experiencing and 2) joint discussion. A more individual and student-centred approach is experimenting by which students are encouraged to experiment with the text. Additionally, the use of small groups is student-centred as well as, of course, a group approach to the instruction of poetry.

### Comparisons of Poetry Teaching Methods



As shown in Table 4.7, comparisons were made with teachers who agreed both with the teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poetry based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning and with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem themselves. While half of the teachers agreed with both the telling and the experimenting methods, only one quarter of the teachers agreed with the experimenting method and disagreed with telling as the preferred method. Teachers preferred to use student-centred approaches whereby students experiment with the reading and

interpretation of the poetry rather than a teacher-centred approach whereby teachers tell students how to interpret the poem.

Table 4.7

## Telling and Experimenting

---

| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Telling  |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
|                            | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree                      | 25 (50%) | 13 (26%) |
| Experimenting              |          |          |
| Disagree                   | 2 (4%)   | 3 (6%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agree BOTH with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND with having students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.

As demonstrated in Table 4.8, over half of the teachers agreed both with the teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning, and with students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher. While one-quarter of teachers agreed with experiencing the text

they disagreed with telling the students how to interpret the poem. Teachers disagreed with both experiencing and telling. The simultaneous use of both of these teacher-centered methods was preferred by teachers when they taught poetry in their classroom.

Table 4. 8

### Telling and Experiencing

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#### Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Telling  |          |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
|              |          | Agree    | Disagree |
| Experiencing | Agree    | 28 (56%) | 13 (26%) |
|              | Disagree | 0 (0%)   | 1 (2%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agree BOTH with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND with students experiencing with the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher.

As shown in Table 4.9, over half of teachers agreed with using both the teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning and with students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the

poem in small groups. Interestingly, one quarter of the teachers agreed with using small groups and disagreed with the use of telling in their classrooms. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in their classrooms to teach poetry. This is interesting as these methods are not complimentary and are, in fact, in opposition to one another. The teacher telling students how to interpret the poem is a teacher-centred/individual approach which contrasts the student-centred/group approach of students reading and discussing in small groups. It would be interesting to further investigate how both of these methods could be used by the same teacher.

Table 4.9

## Telling and Small Groups

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| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Telling  |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
|                            | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree                      | 26 (52%) | 13 (26%) |
| Small Groups               |          |          |
| Disagree                   | 0 (0%)   | 2 (4%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agree BOTH with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

As demonstrated in Table 4.10, over half of the teachers agreed with both using teacher and student joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry and with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher's or the instructional text's interpretation of the meaning as their preferred methods of poetry instruction. One third of the teachers agreed with the use of joint discussion and disagreed with the use of telling in their classrooms. As illustrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both of these methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. It is once again interesting to note that teachers preferred to simultaneously teach methods that are in conflict with one another. Telling is clearly a teacher-centred individual approach, while joint discussion implies that the teacher and the student negotiate the text using a teacher-centred group approach to the process for reading and interpreting a poem.

Table 4. 10

## Telling and Joint Discussion

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|       |          | Telling  |          |
|-------|----------|----------|----------|
|       |          | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree | Agree    | 27 (54%) | 15 (30%) |
|       | Disagree | 0 (0%)   | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who agree BOTH with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher of instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND with teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

As shown in Table 4.11, comparisons were made with teachers who agreed both with the teacher's telling students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher's or the instructional text's interpretation of the meaning and with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. According to the survey results, fewer than one half of the teachers agreed with using both strategy instruction and telling as their preferred methods of teaching poetry in their

classrooms, whereas one fifth of the teachers agreed with using strategy instruction and disagreed with using telling as their preferred methods of poetry instruction. In contrast, one fourth of teachers disagreed with using both strategy instruction and telling in teaching poetry in their classroom. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. These results are more congruent with one another than are previous comparison results, since both methods are teacher-centred/individual approaches that prescribe that teachers directly guide the students in the instruction in the classroom.

TABLE 4. 11

## Telling and Strategy Instruction

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|                      | Telling  |          |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
|                      | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree                | 21 (42%) | 8 (16%)  |
| Strategy Instruction |          |          |
| Disagree             | 1 (2%)   | 11 (22%) |

This table displays the number of teachers who agree BOTH with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or the instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND by strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

As demonstrated in Table 4.12, over three quarters of teachers agreed both with students' experimenting with reading and interpreting the poem and with students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher. As illustrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. These are interesting results since these methods are mutually incongruent. Teachers preferred to use the student-centred/individual approach of students' experimenting by which students negotiate the text on their own without teacher intervention. In contrast, the teachers agreed with the students' experiencing the text while being led by the teacher. This method has an element of student control and ownership through the group work but the method clearly promotes the teacher's guiding the experience of the poem. It would be interesting to see how both of these methods could be negotiated simultaneously in a classroom.

Table 4.12

## Experimenting and Experiencing

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| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Experimenting |          |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------|
|                            | Agree         | Disagree |
| Agree                      | 39 (78%)      | 4 (8%)   |
| Experiencing               | 4 (8%)        | 0 (0%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher.

As shown in Table 4.13, over four-fifths of the teachers agreed with students' experimenting with the reading and interpretation of the poem and with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups. As demonstrated by these results, teachers prefer to use both of these student centred methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. These approaches are more consistent with one another as in both these student-centred approaches, the student is at the centre of control

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The pages have been misnumbered.  
There is no text missing.  
Apologies for any confusion.

Debra Abraham - Radi

over the reading and interpretation of the text in either an individual way in experimenting or group work in small groups.

Table 4. 13

Experimenting and Small Groups

---

| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Small Groups |          |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|
|                            | Agree        | Disagree |
| Agree                      | 40 (80%)     | 4 (8%)   |
| Experimenting              | 0 (0%)       | 2 (4%)   |
| Disagree                   | 0 (0%)       | 2 (4%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

As demonstrated in Table 4.14, four-fifths of teachers agreed with both having students experiment with the reading and interpretation of the poem and with the teacher and student jointly discussing the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry, as their methods of teaching poetry in their classrooms. As illustrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. These results are interesting as the methods are not consistent with one another.

Students' experimenting with the reading and interpretation centres on the students approaching the reading and interpretation of poetry without the guidance of the teacher as an individual, while the teacher's jointly discussing the poetry with the students gives the teacher the role of negotiating the interpretation through the use of group work. It would be of interest to observe these methods simultaneously being used in the classroom.

Table 4. 14

## Experimenting and Joint Discussion

| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Joint Discussion |          |        |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
|                            | Disagree         | Agree    |        |
| Disagree                   | Agree            | 42 (84%) | 4 (8%) |
| Experimenting              | Disagree         | 0 (0%)   | 1 (2%) |

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

As shown in Table 4.15, three-fifths of teachers agreed both with having students experiment with reading and interpreting the poem and with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly

teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. Interestingly, one quarter disagreed with the use of experimenting with the reading and interpretation of the poem while at the same time agreeing with the use of strategy instruction in their classrooms. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. These results are curious as teachers apparently preferred to use two contrasting methods at the same time. Students experimenting is a student-centred/individual approach while teachers directly teaching students strategies is a teacher-centred/individual approach to the teaching of poetry. It would be interesting to see how these two contrasting methods could be simultaneously used in a classroom.

Table 4. 15

## Experimenting and Strategy Instruction

| Methods of Teaching Poetry |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|                            |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Experimenting              | Agree    | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 12 (24%)             | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

As demonstrated in Table 4.16, four-fifths of teachers agreed both with students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher and with students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups. As indicated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. These results are interesting as teachers have again indicated that they would use a teacher-centred approach and a group-centred approach at the same time. It would be interesting to see how these two approaches could be used in the classroom at the same time.

Table 4. 16

## Experiencing and Small Groups

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              | Small Groups |          |
|--------------|--------------|----------|
|              | Agree        | Disagree |
| Experiencing | 41 (82%)     | 4 (8%)   |
| Disagree     | 1 (2%)       | 0 (0%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as led by the teacher AND by students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

As shown in Table 4.17, over four-fifths of teachers agreed both with students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher and with the teacher and student jointly discussing the process for the reading and interpreting the poetry. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods of these teacher-centred/group approaches simultaneously in their instruction. In both of these methods the teacher and group work play a major role in the processes that are used in the interpretation of poetry in the classroom.

Table 4.17

## Experiencing and Joint Discussion

---

| Methods of Teaching Poetry |          | Joint Discussion |          |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
|                            |          | Agree            | Disagree |
| Disagree                   | Agree    | 42 (84%)         | 4 (8%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 1 (2%)           | 0 (0%)   |
| Experiencing               | Agree    | 42 (84%)         | 4 (8%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 1 (2%)           | 0 (0%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher AND with teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

As demonstrated in Table 4.18, two-thirds of teachers agreed both with methods whereby students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as led by the teacher and with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students to read and interpret poetry. One quarter of teachers, however, disagreed with the use of experiencing and chose the use of strategy instruction as their preferred method of instruction in teaching poetry. As illustrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both of these teacher-centred approaches simultaneously in the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. Teachers also tended to prefer the individual instructional approach of the strategy instruction as opposed to the group work method of experiencing the poem.

TABLE 4. 18

## Experiencing and Strategy Instruction

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 Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|--------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|              |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Experiencing | Agree    | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
|              | Disagree | 11 (22%)             | 2 (4%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher AND with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

Table 4.19 shows that over four-fifths of teachers chose both the students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups and the teacher and students jointly discussing the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry as their preferred methods of poetry instruction in their classrooms. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. Interestingly, even though both of these methods are group-oriented, their approaches contrast with one another in the emphasis that is placed on the intervention of the teacher in the instruction. The small groups method focuses on a student-centred/group approach while joint discussion by the teacher and the student is a teacher-centred/group approach. The approaches do not seem to be consistent with one another. It would be interesting to see how these two contrasting approaches could be used at the same time in the teachers' classrooms.

Table 4.19

## Small Groups and Joint Discussion

| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Joint Discussion |          |        |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
|                            | Agree            | Disagree |        |
| Agree                      | 43 (86%)         | 2 (4%)   |        |
| Small Groups               | Disagree         | 1 (2%)   | 0 (0%) |

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups AND with teacher and student joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry.

As demonstrated in Table 4.20, two-thirds of teachers agree both with students' reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups and with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. In contrast, one quarter of teachers disagreed with the use of small groups and agreed with the use of strategy instruction for teaching poetry in their classrooms. As illustrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry. As is demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use two contrasting methods at the same time in their classrooms. Small group instruction focuses on student-centred/group-centered approaches while strategy instruction

focuses on teacher centred/individual approaches whereby the teacher directly teaches the methods students may use to interpret poetry. It would be interesting to further examine these approaches occurring in classrooms at the same time.

Table 4. 20

#### Small Groups and Strategy Instruction

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##### Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|--------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|              |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Small Groups | Agree    | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
|              | Disagree | 12 (24%)             | 0 (0%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups AND with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry.

As shown in Table 4.21, over two-thirds of teachers agree with both teacher and student joint discussion and strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. In contrast, one quarter of teachers disagreed with the use of joint discussion in teaching poetry while agreeing with the use of strategy instruction in their

classrooms. As demonstrated by these results, teachers preferred to use both teacher-centred methods simultaneously in the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. It is interesting to note that these two approaches are consistent with one another as both are teacher-centred approaches to the instruction of poetry, while at the same time they contrast because joint discussion is group-work oriented and strategy instruction is individual work.

Table 4.21

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Joint Discussion and Strategy Instruction

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Methods of Teaching Poetry

|                  |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|                  |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Joint discussion | Agree    | 33 (66%)             | 0 (0%)   |
|                  | Disagree | 12 (24%)             | 1 (2%)   |

---

This table displays the number of teachers who agreed BOTH with teacher and student joint discussion AND with strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry.

### METHODS PREFERENCE CONCLUSION

The analysis of the 15 tables shows that teachers indicated that they did, or perhaps would, use two or more methods simultaneously when they taught poetry in their classrooms. This information demonstrated that they had no clear preference for any particular method. In some instances data led to very contradictory findings as teachers agreed to two apparently opposing methods of poetry instruction. For example, teachers agreed with the use of small group discussion which focuses on a student-centred approach while agreeing with the use of a teacher-focused approach such as joint discussion. Teachers agreed with the use of teacher-centred approaches and also with the use of student-centred approaches, and furthermore appeared to agree to combine these with individual-centred approaches and group-centred approaches. It became clear from the analysis that teachers either didn't know what it is that they do when they teach poetry and were not able to articulate the processes that they used in their classrooms, or they used a wide range of methods with no apparent rationale for when they used teacher-centred approaches versus student-centred approaches. Teachers indicated that they used the same methods at the same time while disagreeing with the use of these same methods. For example, teachers agreed that students should both experiment with

how to read and interpret the poem while at the same time agreeing that students should experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as led by the teacher. Then they contradicted themselves by disagreeing with the use of both of these methods.

As demonstrated in table 4.22, teacher-centred approaches were the least preferred methods for teaching poetry in the classrooms. In fact, one quarter of teachers disagreed with the use both of strategy instruction and of telling as ways for instructing poetry in their classrooms. Student-centred approaches were preferred more than others. This preference was demonstrated by over nine-tenths of the teachers who rated joint discussion and small group instruction as their most preferred methods of poetry instruction. Additionally, the student-centred/individual approach of students experimenting with how to read and interpret the poem was also preferred by teachers for use in their classrooms. The teacher-centred/group approach of students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, which led by the teacher was also a method that teachers were most likely to use for poetry instruction in their classrooms.

Table 4.22

Teacher Response to Agreeing and Disagreeing with Poetry Instruction Methods

Agree with Both Methods of Instruction

|                  | Telling | Experimenting | Experiencing | Small Group | Joint Discussion | Strategy |
|------------------|---------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|----------|
| Telling          | x       | 50%           | 56%          | 52%         | 54%              | 42%      |
| Experimenting    | 6%      | x             | 78%          | 80%         | 84%              | 60%      |
| Experiencing     | 2%      | 0             | x            | 82%         | 84%              | 60%      |
| Small Groups     | 4%      | 4%            | 0            | x           | 86%              | 60%      |
| Joint Discussion | 2%      | 2%            | 0            | 0           | x                | 66%      |
| Strategy         | 22%     | 2%            | 4%           | 0           | 2%               | x        |

Disagree with Both Methods of Instruction

Note: The upper quadrant (above the x) demonstrates the teachers who agreed with both methods of poetry instruction. The lower quadrant (below the x) illustrates the teachers who disagreed with both methods of poetry instruction.

As illustrated in table 4.23, one-quarter of teachers agreed with more student-centred approaches such as experimenting, experiencing, small groups, and joint discussion, while disagreeing with teacher-centred/individual approaches of telling and strategy instruction while led by the teacher. This is the only area where teachers clearly demonstrated a preference for the types of poetry instruction that they would not use in their own classrooms.

Table 4. 23

Teachers Who Agreed with One Method and Disagreed with the Second Method of Poetry Instruction

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| Disagree         | Agree   |               |              |              |                  |          |
|------------------|---------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------|
|                  | Telling | Experimenting | Experiencing | Small Groups | Joint Discussion | Strategy |
| Telling          | x       | 26%           | 26%          | 26%          | 26%              | 16%      |
| Experimenting    | 4%      | x             | 8%           | 8%           | 8%               | 4%       |
| Experiencing     | 0       | 8%            | x            | 8%           | 8%               | 4%       |
| Small Groups     | 0       | 0             | 2%           | x            | 4%               | 4%       |
| Joint Discussion | 0       | 0             | 2%           | 2%           | x                | 0        |
| Strategy         | 2%      | 24%           | 22%          | 24%          | 24%              | x        |

Note: This table represents teachers who agree with one method while disagreeing with the second method of teaching poetry.

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The researcher hoped that the qualitative survey data and the interviews would clarify further what it is that teachers do when they teach poetry, since the quantitative survey results demonstrated that teachers agreed with using two contradictory methods and did not discriminate between either method specifically when they taught poetry in their classrooms. Teachers did show less of a preference for poetry instruction that is more teacher-centred. Despite the tendency to rate teacher-centred approaches less favourably, these approaches still were among the approaches that teachers supported and used in their classrooms. Student-centred approaches were favoured by teachers more than

telling and strategy instruction which require comparatively more direct teaching by the teacher, and less student involvement. Individual approaches tended to be less favoured than group work approaches to the instruction of poetry, yet at the same time teachers agreed with the use of both individual and group approaches

#### EXTENDED RESPONSE SURVEY QUESTION ANALYSIS

In the extended response survey questions, teachers responded to several questions which the researcher used to gain further insight into what teachers do to guide their practice in poetry instruction.

As is reflected in Table 4.24, when teachers were asked what role poetry had in their Language Arts program, one-third of teachers indicated that poetry instruction was explored as an art form in their classrooms. Art form in poetry is explored for either an appreciation for the poetry itself or as a means of students' expressing themselves through reading aloud or reciting poetry. Students in the case of poetry appreciation were encouraged to explore poetry for what it means and appreciate its value as an art form as such. In the case of personal expression students were encouraged to explore poetry as the medium to express their thoughts and feelings or to understand those of others.

Two-thirds of teachers identified poetry as having a diverse role in their curriculum. In one-third of teachers' classrooms poetry was a major focus as a unit of study in contrast with one-fifth of classrooms where poetry was studied as a literary genre or in a separate unit. In only 12% of cases, teachers identified poetry as having the student-centred focus consistent with the qualitative survey results. In 8% of classrooms, poetry played either a supplemental role or was part of a thematic poetry unit. In only 6% of classrooms was poetry part of an integrated unit in the curriculum. Teachers preferred that poetry be studied either as an art form or as a major unit in the classroom curriculum. It seems, then, that poetry did play a significant role in classrooms as either a means of students' expressing themselves through reading aloud or reciting poetry, or as a major part of the Language Arts Program.

Table 4.24

## The Role of Poetry in the Teachers' Language Arts Program

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|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Art Form</b>              | 30% |
| Appreciation                 | 16% |
| Oral Reading/Expression      | 16% |
| <b>Curriculum</b>            | 58% |
| Major Unit                   | 30% |
| Literary Genre/Separate Unit | 18% |
| Student Centred Focus        | 12% |
| Supplemental Role            | 8%  |
| Thematic/Poetry Unit         | 8%  |
| Integrated Unit              | 6%  |
| <b>N/A</b>                   | 12% |

Note: The N/A category includes no answer and nil for 1994/95 responses. Several survey responses were counted more than once since some respondents identified several areas in their description of the role that poetry had in their Language Arts program.

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Survey question #5: What role does poetry have in your Language Arts program?

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Teachers were also asked to examine what motivated them to make changes in the way they teach poetry. In the examination of their teaching practices, they highlighted four specific areas that accounted for changes in their poetry instruction as shown in Table 4.25. Teachers indicated that their desire to make their poetry

program more student-centred motivated them to make changes in their poetry instruction. This response is not surprising since teachers, by nature, want to engage students in learning experiences in their classes. Over one-third of teachers stated that students had the most significant effect on their teaching practice in the classroom.

Professional development also played a significant role in being a motivator for change. One-quarter of the teachers said that professional opportunities such as workshops, conferences, professional dialogue enhanced their professional growth and had a positive effect on making changes in their teaching practice.

Over 25% of the respondents indicated that positive classroom experiences had a positive effect on making changes to how they taught poetry. To a slightly lesser degree, in 16% of responses, changes in the Provincial curriculum and conceptions of the practice of teaching or in the method of instruction had a positive impact on how teachers taught poetry in their classrooms. In 24% of cases teachers either could not identify the reasons that made them change, or were not prepared to make any changes.

It is interesting to note that students had a significant impact on how teachers make changes in their classrooms. Teachers stated that they were more willing to make changes when the students

indicated that changes needed to be made. Teachers even created student inventories to collect the data needed to make appropriate changes in how poetry was presented in their classrooms. Equally encouraging was the positive impact that professional development had on encouraging teachers to make changes in how they taught. This finding reinforces that professional development does have a positive effect on teaching practices. Therefore, as these findings indicate, opportunities for students to voice their opinions, and professional development should be considered as positive motivators for changes to occur in classrooms.

Table 4.25

Motivators for Change in Poetry Instruction Practices

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|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Student Centredness              | 32% |
| Professional Development         | 22% |
| Experience                       | 18% |
| Curriculum/Method of Instruction | 16% |
| Unidentifiable Reasons/No Change | 24% |

Note: Several survey responses were double counted because respondents identified several motivators for change in their teaching practice with poetry instruction in their Language Arts program.

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Survey question #8b: If so, how do you account for this change?

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When teachers were asked what aspects attributed to their personal satisfaction with poetry instruction in their classrooms, over half of the teachers surveyed identified student centredness as a positive contributor to their personal satisfaction with their poetry instruction. Responses such as "I think that my love of poetry is appreciated and accepted by the students thereby encouraging them to appreciate poetry" and "Students seem to enjoy poetry. All are more open to it and some discover a new form/genre" were typical of the thinking in this category. Additionally, being pleased with the curriculum or methods that the teachers were using accounted for one third of the responses which showed the teachers' level of satisfaction with their poetry instruction. Teachers also considered time, resources, professional development and experience as contributors to their level of satisfaction - but to a lesser degree. Again it was demonstrated that students did contribute positively to teachers' satisfaction with the ways they taught poetry. If students indicated that they benefited positively from their experience with poetry, then teacher satisfaction is also increased. To continue to achieve positive change, teachers identified the need to continue to seek opportunities to solicit student input about their classroom practice as being very important.

Table 4.26

Contributors to Teachers Level of Satisfaction with Poetry Instruction in Their Classrooms

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|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Student - Centredness    | 54% |
| Curriculum/Methodology   | 28% |
| Time and Resources       | 8%  |
| Experience               | 6%  |
| Professional Development | 2%  |
| Unidentifiable Reasons   | 8%  |

Note: Several survey responses were double counted because respondents identified several areas in their description of the reasons for their level of satisfaction with their poetry instruction in their Language Arts classroom.

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Survey question # 9: Are you generally pleased with the way you  
 teach poetry?                      b) Explain your answer  
 For the most part    \_\_\_                      Sometimes    \_\_\_                      Not always

---

Teachers identified various reasons for wanting to change and for the areas that they would change in their poetry instruction. Two-fifths of teachers highlighted Provincial curriculum changes as the most predominant area that needed exploration in their classrooms. Time and resources were identified as aspects that assisted in making changes. For teachers who wanted to change an aspect of their poetry instruction, more variety of poems,

alternative approaches (i.e. thematic, integration), and allocating more time to the study of poetry were highlighted as ways to assist in making changes occur in their classrooms. One respondent articulated how s/he would change their program as follows: "Incorporate more student exposure to different poetry anthologies. Allow students to choose poetry they like - and explain why they like it. Discussion should focus not so much on what the poems are about, but more on why poems appealed to the students".

Table 4.27

Areas Teachers Identified as Needed for Change in Their Instruction of Poetry

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|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Curriculum/Methodology | 40% |
| Time                   | 12% |
| Resources              | 6%  |
| Pleased/No changes     | 8%  |
| No opinion/No changes  | 32% |

Note: Several survey responses were double counted as respondents identified several areas that they would change in their poetry instruction in their Language Arts classroom.

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Survey question #9c: If you've thought about changing the way you teach poetry, what would you like to change?

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Resources were identified by teachers as being the most important aid in making changes occur in their classrooms. Areas such as resource books, poetry anthologies, professional reading, collegial dialogue, theme based units which include poetry were highlighted by teachers as the best way to assist them in making changes in their poetry instruction. Professional development by way of networking with other teachers, classroom visitations, workshops, collegial discussions and course work were also highlighted as ways to accomplish changes. Interactive processes that occurred as a result of the students, teachers, material and environment working together assisted in making changes in curriculum and methods in their classrooms. A small percentage of teachers cited personal reasons such as having the courage to make the changes happen in their classroom or needing time to think about making changes.

Table 4.28

**Motivation and Assistance Required by Teachers to Bring About Changes in Their Classroom**

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|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Resources                | 18% |
| Professional Development | 12% |
| Curriculum/Methodology   | 10% |
| Time                     | 8%  |
| Personal Reasons         | 4%  |
| Unidentifiable Reasons   | 56% |

Note: Several survey responses were double counted because respondents identified several variables that they would use to make changes occur in their classrooms.

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Survey question #9d: How might you go about making this change?

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In the final open ended question, teachers were encouraged to make any additional comments as a concluding statement to the survey. Five of the 90 respondents, made additional comments on the neglect of poetry in the last few years. One expressed the rekindled interest that he had as a result of this survey. Poetry was identified by one of the teachers as one of their favorite subjects to teach! In addition, one of the teacher's said that she enjoyed the creativity of the book project they put together in their classroom at the end of

the year. The comments can be summed up in the positive statement, "I love poetry!".

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW RESULTS

The interview questions explored and illuminated the extent to which teachers are knowledgeable about response techniques for use with poetry as well as teachers' perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limit their ability to transform their current practice in teaching poetry.

In the seven interviews that were conducted, the six questions were posed to address the following areas of poetry instruction and teacher change (see Appendix G). The first question sought clarification of the responses from the survey to gain further insight into the processes used in the teachers' classroom. The second question probed further into the underlying principles associated with the teachers' classroom practice. The subsequent question addressed the goals of the program and the impact of the poetry instruction on the students. The goal of these questions was to determine how well articulated the teachers' goals were and how their students were involved in decision making. The next question focussed on the elements of change and the impact of change on classroom practice. The fifth question was designed to examine how

change occurred and what elements assisted in making this change occur in the teachers' classroom. The final question allowed the interviewee to address any other aspects of the interviewee's poetry program that was not yet discussed or any other aspects of poetry instruction that he/she wished to address.

Cathy (a pseudonym) - the teacher leading the experience of poetry in her classroom was able to articulate the reasons why she strongly agreed with having her students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem as led by the teacher.

For Cathy, poetry was one of two main foci for the entire teaching year. Her first purpose for using poetry in her classroom was to have the students learn to enjoy poetry itself by knowing what goes into the make-up of a poem, whether that be an expression of personal experience or the use of different techniques. Cathy's second purpose was that her students be able to read poetry imaginatively, as opposed to critically, to develop as readers and to express themselves.

Before even starting a poem, Cathy would tell her students something about the era that the poet was writing in so that the students could read the poem with an understanding of why the poet wrote using this style to explore this topic. Then a typical lesson in her class would start with the reading of the poem by either

Cathy or a student followed by a second reading by Cathy. Then the students and Cathy talked about theme and what she called thesis to try to delve into the poem deeper to find out what exactly the poet said about the subject. Mood would also be discussed and the class would discuss the effectiveness of the poet's expression. Then the students and Cathy would analyze a series of techniques like rhyme, rhythm, simile, metaphor and so on. From Cathy's perspective the students in her class, both the good students and the weaker students, responded equally well to the study of literary techniques, the length, the quality, that was demonstrated in their own poems. Cathy believed that the articulated goals were met on both an analytical and a creative level, and her belief was further demonstrated in subsequent student work since her students used more similes and metaphors in their written prose.

In response to the question focused on the element of change and its impact in the classroom, Cathy described herself as a very conservative teacher who, once she had something that worked well, tended to stick to it and not change unless there were an external force such as curricular changes that made her change. Cathy changed three or four of the poems studied each year in her poetry unit to make the unit fresher to teach, but she still maintained the same basic instructional patterns. In discussion with the

interviewer, Cathy was open to exploring other ideas. Such willingness was not originally apparent in either her survey or her interview to this point. The inclusion of a bit of group work or the approach of having students do their own individual exploration and analysis of the poem without the teacher's analysis were possibilities that Cathy was willing to explore further in her poetry instruction. To assist in these changes, Cathy wanted to visit other classes, particularly poetry classes, just to see how other teachers taught. Cathy believed that she was a pretty good imitator and if she could see something that she could imitate and combine with her own ideas she would have the courage to make changes in her classroom practices.

Marvin ( a pseudonym) was better able, in the interview than in the survey, to articulate the processes used in his classroom for poetry instruction and thus clarify his ambiguous survey results. Initially in the interview, Marvin stated that he had already made changes to his poetry program this year and would focus on his newly designed approach to poetry for the duration of our interview.

Within a thematic unit on Change, grade 8 students in Marvin's class were to come to class with a rough draft of a poem that they had put together the day before. Prior to this assignment, the students had had some exposure to the use of a poem as a unit

icebreaker or as a means of accessing prior knowledge in an introduction to a poetry unit. Literary techniques, such as repetition, were briefly overviewed as well as the examination of the plot of teacher-selected poems.

A second poem, 'Reflection', stimulated the students' imagination while they examined it, searched for synonyms for the word, reflection, and expressed their overall impressions of its ideas on the subjects of change and identity. A variety of poems were read aloud from the overhead enabling student under the direction of Marvin to discuss some of the figures of speech that they found so that they would be able to work these into their own poems.

After this initial activity, Marvin had the students express their feelings on a chosen topic. Students found it difficult to write about feelings, but by using a topic as a springboard, they were able to demonstrate feelings. Even though Marvin articulated the process as vicarious, at best, the students were still able to complete the task. As part of the established criteria for the final copy, the poem was to have one figure of speech, concrete words, one for each sense, highlighted and marked in the column. From Marvin's perspective, a positive outcome of this process was that the students went beyond proofreading to edit their work. Marvin wasn't

sure whether the students liked their final poems but according to him the thinking and the processing that occurred during the class was beneficial. From Marvin's perspective what made the lessons successful was that the students were actively participating as they searched for the right word or even more precise or varied adjectives to meet the criteria of literary techniques (e.g. the use of alliteration, simile). Because of the level of questions that the students were asking Marvin was able to state that the experience was a good one.

In Marvin's initial poetry lesson(s) the students often worked individually but for a portion of the time, they worked with a learning buddy or partner. The next day, the students automatically used a learning buddy/partner on occasion, to ask for a word. The teacher viewed the class as being fairly constructive when the students were demonstrating their thinking by being quiet and turning the odd time to a partner and by maintaining a low level of noise in the classroom. This teacher tended to describe language-centred approaches to the development of poetry instruction in his classroom.

Marvin would like to have made changes in his poetry program, but half way through the school year, his teaching position was altered. He was left dissatisfied because his students neither

acquired an appreciation of poetry nor gained very much from its study.

It was the teacher's hope that social studies could be integrated with the language arts to experiment with the content of both subjects. This plan never materialized due to his change in assignment.

One change he did make occurred when in order to alleviate teacher boredom, he picked up a copy of old textual material and choose some stories from it. The students really responded positively to the material and also, because it was new for the teacher, it was fun. This encouraged the teacher to seek more current thematic material of the same type. He looked for material that he could identify with, that was also topical, very appropriate, and relevant for the students. This material is integrated into units that had a short story, some poems, and a play while incorporating all of the functional writing aspects, which the teacher liked.

Another way that Marvin solicited feedback for program changes was through a student evaluation in which the students wrote down things they liked and the things they didn't like about the poetry unit. From these student responses, the teacher saw ways to incorporate more variety into the program rather than just by adding short stories, as he had previously. By using the thematic

approach, poetry was read in connection with a theme that was being explored and was considered again under another topic. Specific poetry forms were taught within the context of the unit (e.g. haiku). From this teacher's perspective, there was a little more work for the teacher because he has to constantly keep track of what the students are supposed to be learning with each topic. In contrast, a genre unit that the teacher had used previously involved much easier assessment of goals, achievement and progress. This teacher considered teaching poetry in an integrated thematic unit to be a better approach than teaching poetry as an isolated genre. The focus, for this teacher, was on the record keeping to ensure that the required literary techniques were taught and that the students were exposed to a variety of different poems as was expected for that age level. From the perspective of the benefit for students, the teacher hoped that both student and teacher would be more engaged with the increased variety and choice of poems that included some poems written by the students. As a final comment on the difference or change in the classroom, the teacher felt that the type of students (French Immersion students) is a big factor on the interactive process in the classroom whether the unit is successful or not successful.

Wade, (a pseudonym) elaborated on the teacher-centred and student-centred processes that he used in his classroom for poetry instruction. Wade regularly used the teacher-centred method of teacher telling the students how to read and interpret poetry. He told students how to read and interpret poetry. At the same time, he used the student-centred approaches, in which the students experiment and experience the reading of poetry. In his classroom, poetry was a unit in itself, and was not integrated with other literature units. For convenience, Wade relied on mainly one source for most of the material because he and the students had copies of the selections, they looked at a number of different poems or types of poems. This teacher tried to achieve a balance between reading poetry for enjoyment and for opportunities for discussion. Initially, Wade tended not to include the heavy analysis part of poetry, but later students looked at other poems in much greater detail. The degree to which analysis occurred depended on the analytical parts of speech that Wade wanted his students to focus on. He had the students answer very specific questions on the poems which they discussed later. Sometimes they discussed them a little bit in advance, and sometimes they read the poem before looking at the questions. Sometimes the teacher let the students tackle the selection on their own and then have a discussion afterwards. The

instruction was teacher-directed in the large group setting. Individual work opportunities were part of a writing project that was tied into the poetry unit which focussed on writing specific types of poems with specific guidelines. The teacher had an established framework that was flexible enough for students to extend their learning in any direction that they wanted once they had met the teacher's fairly specific minimum requirements.

In the survey, Wade stressed that he had done some thinking about changing his poetry program. One of the areas under consideration was providing students with more works to read as the teacher had previously done in the poetry unit. Given that the poetry unit was scheduled for the time just before or after Spring Break, a rut time of the year, the unit would be more difficult to teach. He planned to opt for more individual or small group work than he usually used. Wade stated that discussions with colleagues and people who had tried other methods were beneficial when they could identify what did work, what didn't work and how their poetry units were organized. These collegial discussions were helpful in transforming his current methods in poetry instruction. He also thought that professional materials, resources and suggested methods that he could use were also helpful in making changes to his program.

Robert, (a pseudonym) articulated the teacher-centred processes used in his classroom for poetry instruction and elaborated the reasons for strongly agreeing that students should experience the reading and interpretation of the poem in a lesson led by the teacher. One of Robert's considerations was the strength of the class, but initially he did teacher-directed large group instruction to model the questioning techniques that were to be used during the poetry unit. He used this method to direct his students about how to present a poem to the class. The first two or three poems were directed by the teacher but after that, the students started to take more ownership of the reading and instruction of the poems because they saw the direction that he was taking and the students were able to make meaning for themselves. Robert used the same method to teach figures of speech. One example of this approach was seen in his teaching about simile, which he tended to downplay as this was not the only aspect of poetry that he believed is important. For Robert, poetry went beyond the "six figures of speech" that show figurative language as poetry embraces charm and imagery.

The major oral assignment in poetry was for the students to teach a poem to the class by questioning the students to determine the meaning of the poem the way that Robert had modelled for them.

This procedure involved the whole class at the beginning of the year but after that students were on their own using the teacher established protocol for group work and their individual work. After this point, Robert believed that the students were able to express themselves and do group work. The students were divided into four or five groups in the room, each of them studying a different poem. The group worked together to answer teacher- created questions or come up with a way to present the poem to the class. One of Robert's articulated goals was plenty of poetry exposure. With these assignments combined, the students created an anthology of over fifty poems which included ten poems that they had chosen, three that they have written, six that were written as a class, one that they had reviewed as a group and twenty-five other poems that their classmates had taught to them. At this point, the students could tell why they chose a poem, what they thought it was about, and what appealed to them about their poem. The students could identify figurative language and then write their own poems. The class read many 'formula' poems, e.g. limericks, haikus, warm-up poems that include verb, adjective models, synonym poems, etc. and then they wrote their own poems to add to their poetry book to reflect what they had learned in poetry. The students had one test that was done altogether: At the end of the unit, students demonstrated their level

of comprehension through their response to a sight poem. Students responded well to the unit with 90% of the students liking it! The students liked the unit because they could usually find a poem or two that they liked. In the first two weeks, the poetry unit was based very much on an oral approach that included whole class discussions and presentations. The students didn't write very much at all in this initial introduction until they began to write in their booklets.

Robert would not change the format because the poetry unit worked. One change that he did identify was the search for new poems. In an attempt to make the poetry unit different for the teacher every year, he changed the poems and did not use the same poems repeatedly. To meet the needs of the students who saw song lyrics as poetry he added song lyrics, even though Robert did not consider lyrics to be poetry. Art work, illustrations of the poems as well as biographical research on the poet could be included in the students presentation to the class. For Robert these changes that were implemented over time seemed to be natural to make. He said, "it just struck me that I should" (make these changes). Students had an influence on his decision-making because when students expressed interest in a particular area he added it to the poetry unit. For example, while studying a Robert Frost poem, students wanted to

find out more about the poet and that was how the biography aspect was incorporated into the poetry study. Robert indicated that teaching the same thing year after year was not his preference. That being said, however, Robert indicated some aspects would not change. For example, poems such as 'The Highwayman', 'The Road not Taken', and 'Whales' are some of the poems that would always be explored by his students. Other poems were discarded when they no longer reflected society's concerns. Students were encouraged to bring poetry books from home so that the class had diverse sources from which to choose. Not surprisingly, in closing, Robert indicated that poetry instruction was a favorite of his.

Marj (a pseudonym) articulated that students read and interpret poetry best in her classroom by using a small group Dias approach. She elaborated on the kinds or types of activities that occur in her class around poetry and what a typical poetry lesson or unit might be like. For Marj there was no clear typical lesson since each lesson depended on the students, and on Marj's consideration of what kind of poem the students might be interested in. This approach was based on the professional reading that Marj recently did on how aspects of poetry instruction interact with one another. Marj's goal was for the students to understand the poem in a way that made sense to them. This didn't give them free license to say just

anything. The students had to be able to support their opinion based on what they read in the poem. Marj's inclination was not to go into intensive interpretation because she believed that unless Milton or Shakespeare were sitting on the desk beside the reader with first hand information, no one can be sure that the interpretation that is being offered in the class was really what the writers meant. Marj preferred student ownership so that students own what the poem says to them. Marj said that in order to make the students read carefully and understand what they read, they need to support what they believe with reference to the associations that they make in the poem. The students may associate a particular passage, phrase or word with something completely outside of the teacher's experience, and it may change the meaning of the poem for them, making it dramatically more important to them. Teachers need to understand that.

Her lessons centred around the teacher's presenting a poem with a series of questions that had the students, as individuals, examine themselves and decide what they think. Marj used a variety of strategies which included the following; "plus, minus and interesting" (the students identified elements of the poem that they found positive, negative and interesting); problem solving (the students solved problems that were presented in the poem); and a

modified Dias model. In her classroom, the modified Dias model had Marj arranging the students into groups, then after reading as a group, students were asked to share the poem, to read the poem, to listen to the poem, and then to talk about what they each thought. Marj then asked them to share problems with each other. Marj found that by using this approach the student's understanding of the poem increased. Usually by the end of the series of lessons, the class had common group problems to solve with the goal of coming to a group consensus solution to the problem.

Marj solicited feedback from the students about whether they liked the process, whether they should keep it and whether the process was relevant. The process, as articulated by Marj, varied dependent on the students and the modelling process that was used to direct student learning. When the students knew what was going on (from the teacher's perspective) then they were asked to write their responses.

Marj strongly agreed with teacher-directed strategy instruction, for she believed that this was the way that worked best with the students. Marj believed that her role as the teacher was to help the students to focus seriously on the poem beyond the students' initial reaction which tends to be a value judgment about whether they like the poem or not. Marj's goal was to give the

students a purpose to read and some questions that they were required to think through. By directing the students to read the poetry, she let them know that they were not going to like some of what they read and that they were going to like some of what they read.

This approach encouraged the students to learn to be discriminating about their opinion on what they like and don't like. Marj incorporated students' selections into her program thereby adding variety to the instruction from year to year. This process included students' bringing in their own poems examined in other years, poems that they thought were particularly liked. The teacher also would provide collections of books that the students could read. Marj invited students to participate by bringing something that they had to present to the class. The students conducted essentially the same set of exercises that were presented earlier as they talked about the poem from beginning to end. This method presented the students with contrasts about what other in interpretations of individual poems. Some students liked listening to the interpretation of a poem made by others, since others liked it and they could expand from someone else's understandings of the possibilities of the poem.

For Marj, change, to some extent, occurred every year in her classroom. Changes depended on the group of kids, the teachers that Marj is working with, and the school climate. Additionally, Marj indicated that she would like to spend more time on her poetry unit but it was hard to justify this time when so many other skills need to be taught. Marj believed that it would be beneficial to have some first hand information from writers and poets as this information would assist in making changes. Marj believed that changes in the poems presented is essential since using the same poem year after year is as deadly to herself as well as to the kids. The following factors were identified by Marj as enhancing her ability to transform her current practices in teaching poetry: student's responses to the poetry (whether they reacted to it really well or not), the kids themselves, their energy level; the students' ability to work together as opposed to alone, as well as their competitiveness; her colleagues and their appreciation of poetry, the building - i.e. what facilities are available each year; and having a new staff member to share ideas with. Marj would make changes in her poetry program only if someone, who she perceived as being really knowledgeable, were presenting poetry in a way that she saw was better than her own method. Some of the key aspects for Marj have been a number of people, a number of professional resource materials such as Dias. Marj also shared her own poetry writing

with the students to be able to talk about interpretation. As a closing comment, what was identified as both a strength and a weakness was that she tended to follow the procedure of first reflecting on her practices, then examining alternatives before implementing them. This kind of reflective thinking is seen by Marj as both a strength and a weakness in a teacher.

As she was a novice Grade 6 teacher, Sally (a pseudonym) had difficulty articulating how students read and interpret poetry best and in elaborating what kinds or types of activities occurred in her classroom and what a typical poetry lesson or unit was like. She did, however, indicate that she felt that a mini - unit in poetry could benefit the students as well as herself. She had given some consideration to the planning of the poetry unit and was able to identify two areas that she was currently considering. First, she considered the material to be used and its appropriateness, so that it would hook the students and they would have a positive enthusiastic response to poetry. Secondly, Sally wanted the poetry unit to be very non-threatening and something that would give the students a strong sense of success. For Sally, the motivator for considering a poetry unit was that there was a place in the class timetable specifically designed for something that the students would find attractive. Sally indicated that she had a positive

attitude towards poetry while in school herself, but she did plan to change her poetry unit from what had been done. One of the ideas discussed by Sally was having students read Robert Service and connect his poems with the Social Studies program as it dealt with such topics as early Canada and old trade routes, which is very closely related to Robert Service's themes.

In trying to implement poetry in the classroom, Sally identified the first step as gathering information, books on poetry, teacher packages, seeing what other people were doing, what was recommended for the grade 6 program and using resource people such as the librarian. In discussions with the students, Sally found that there was not any student interest at this point in poetry. As Sally was in the initial planning stages of adding poetry to her Language Arts program, her thinking at this point was preliminary and in the initial planning stages.

Dillion (a pseudonym) was a new teacher of the English Language Arts program articulated that students read and interpret poetry best by reading and discussing and interpreting the poem in small groups. He was also able to describe what this group-centred approach would look like in his classroom. He described a process that was teacher-centred. Dillion took a poem that the students had and examine it line by line with the whole class until the students

had understood that poem. Students then read the poem line by line discussing what each line meant, what they thought the point of the poem was, what meaning the author conveyed and also talking about the language of the poem - that is whether similes or metaphors were used. Then the students worked on their own, interpreting the poem after several whole class readings focussing on different styles of poems. Next, the students had to pick a poem and teach it to the class using the same basic format that the teacher had used.

The last thing that Dillion did was to have students create a poetry anthology of poems collected by students. The students were required to have poems that represented different types of poetry so one of them might be a serious or a humorous poem or a narrative, or descriptive poem. The students had to tell Dillion what the poem was about and why they picked that poem. The unit finished with a poetry exam or test that just mainly looked at definitions and terminology and also a poem about which the students had to answer some questions requiring them to make an interpretation.

The unit was designed to be large group instruction with teacher direction and then featuring students' working on their own or in a pair or with a few other students to discuss their poem. On one occasion, Dillion had the students work in a group in which they discussed the poem to discover the meaning of the poem in a small

group. The individual work occurred when the students worked on their anthology with the occasional sharing with one another of a poem that they enjoyed or thought was interesting. Dillion's goals for poetry instruction were that students understand and appreciate poetry as a unique form of literary language, and that students appreciate, understand and see poetry for its aesthetic value as well as something to be read aloud. To Dillion, poetry is more complex than prose, but students can appreciate the reason why the author or the poet used poetic language. Finally, Dillion wanted to help the students experience the language and make sense of it.

Dillion thought of making changes to his poetry program by first integrating poetry into a theme-based approach throughout his Language Arts program rather than teach poetry as a separate unit. For example, when a class studied grammar, Dillion would relate to poetry. He would also bring in such works as cinquain, or poems composed of all adjectives or all verbs. Students would study a noun and then extend that to create a poem that employed all nouns or they would look at descriptive poems.

The way that poetry was taught that year (as previously described) seemed to Dillion to be disjointed as the students studied, for example, a 5 line poem but with no real reason for doing so. The poetry could have been theme-based for example, when they

studied a big unit on descriptive writing, or on senses, or when analyzing a story. It seemed to Dillon that this would be a good time to have brought in poetry. The students helped Dillon come to the realization that these were changes that could be implemented. The students were interested in poetry at first but very quickly lost interest. The students liked the anthology as they enjoyed finding their own poems.

Students in Dillon's classes did not acquire the skill of interpreting because the process became too monotonous. Even though new poems with different styles and content were often introduced. The procedure was still the same. Dillon told the students about a poem he chose instead of letting the students pick poems throughout the year. If the students had had a chance to for example look at a poem that they had chosen themselves as part of an integrated unit the process would have been more meaningful for the students than the one that was used.

To a teacher new to English Language Arts, Dillon said knowing about available poems relating to the specific topic that was being studied would have been helpful. For example, if the class were studying conflict instead of the teacher going through a number of resources to find poems that related, it would have been useful to have a resource that listed poems about conflict. Also,

basic information about poetry like the language of poems, the mechanics of poetry at a simple level that say, "This is a metaphor because ... " would be helpful. Dillion believed that the students' understanding about the language of poems and the mechanics of poetry is important for them because it helps the students and the teacher to understand what the author says. In the final analysis Dillion felt that maybe the teacher could just guess at the poetry interpretation just like the students do.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following conclusions may be made about the research questions in this study: Teachers in the English program preferred methods that were group-oriented such as joint discussion and small groups and, experiencing. Equally as highly rated by these teachers was the student-centred/individual approach of students experimenting with the reading and interpreting the poem themselves. English Instruction teachers also favorably rated small groups and experiencing as favored methods which tend to be small group oriented but range from teacher-centred, in the case of experiencing, to student-centred in the case of small group work.

English Instruction teachers were less likely to use the teacher centred/individual approaches which featured the teacher

telling students how to read and interpret the poem, and strategy-instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. Yet, while English instruction teachers appeared to be less likely to use teacher directed/individual methods in their classrooms, these methods were still supported by over half of teachers. English instruction teachers tended to place more of an emphasis on the students' being at the center of the instructional practice as decision makers along with the teachers in the processes that were implemented in the classroom. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the student.

In the French Immersion program, teachers preferred methods of poetry instruction that were group-centred such as students' experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher, small groups in which students read, discuss, and interpret the poem altogether, and joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry. Strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry was also favoured. French Immersion teachers agreed with their English counterparts in being less likely to use the teacher telling the students how to read/interpret the poem based

on the teacher's or instructional text's interpretation of the meaning.

French Immersion teachers tended to encourage students to be at the center of the instructional practice as well as being, along with the teacher the decision maker in the processes that were implemented in the classroom. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the student where more student-centred group work approaches were favoured. The use of methods in which the teacher or the text solely guided the instruction were equally less favoured by teachers in the French Immersion program as their teacher counterparts in the English program.

The data analysis of the tables indicated no apparent preferences shown by teachers for the instruction of poetry in their classrooms. In fact, the results demonstrated that the teachers surveyed didn't really know what it was that they did when they taught poetry in their classrooms. Teachers did not discriminate between methods presented in the survey.

The qualitative survey data and the interviews clarified further what it is that these teachers did when they taught poetry. The quantitative survey results demonstrated that teachers agreed with using two contradictory methods and that they did not

discriminate between methods specifically when they taught poetry in their classrooms. Teachers tended to be less likely to use teacher-centred poetry instruction. Despite the tendency to rate teacher-centred approaches less favourably, these approaches were still among those that teachers supported and used in their classrooms. Student-centred approaches were favoured by teachers more than telling and strategy instruction as they required more direct teaching by the teacher, with limited student involvement. Individual approaches tended to be less favoured than group work approaches to the instruction of poetry; yet at the same time teachers agreed with the use of both individual and group approaches at the same time. The responses to the interview questions illuminated the extent to which the teachers were knowledgeable about response techniques for use with poetry as well as the teachers' perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limited their ability to transform their current practice in teaching poetry. Teachers said that they studied poetry either as an art form or as part of the Language Arts curriculum. They did not seem to know that the Language Arts curriculum prescribed the teaching of poetry as an art form. Poetry was taught as an art to be appreciated as well as used as a means of personal expression.

One third of teachers identified poetry as a major unit in their Language Arts program.

Teachers indicated the following four elements of change: students were responsible for the changes that teachers made towards a more student-centred curriculum. The provincial curriculum or method of instruction motivated change experiences. Professional development including resource people, professional materials encouraged changes in the instruction of poetry in classrooms. Half of the teachers stated that student-centred positive feedback determined whether or not teachers were pleased with the way that they taught poetry. Other influences affecting change included time and resources, experience, curriculum/methodology and professional development. If teachers thought about changing the way that they taught poetry, they identified the following as possible areas: looking at including more variety of poems, alternative approaches (e.g. thematic, integrated), allocating more time to the study of poetry, curriculum and methodology as well as resources. Over one third of teachers had no opinion or thought of changing their program. Resources such as books, poetry anthologies, professional reading, collegial dialogue, theme based units which include poetry illustrating each theme were highlighted by teachers as the best assistance in making

change in their classrooms. Over half of the teachers did not know how they might go about changing if they were to make a change in how they teach poetry.

Even though teachers had difficulty articulating in the survey data what it was that they did to teach poetry, in the interviews the teachers described their use of teacher-centred approaches. This was especially interesting since the teachers to be interviewed were selected because of their responses to favoring the six different approaches. In addition, one was chosen because of her inexperience.

Finally the interview showed that teacher-centred approaches were favoured by those interviewed, even though the survey results indicated that such approaches were not generally favoured.

## CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This descriptive survey research study polled the opinions of teachers with the explicit purpose of discovering teachers' behaviors, beliefs and intentions with respect to the teaching of poetry. The research focussed on Middle Years teacher practices to determine what some teachers did in the area of poetry instruction and what theoretical understandings drove their teaching practices.

The principal research question was: What do teachers do to teach poetry? The sub-question then was: Why do teachers teach poetry as they do?

In addition, this study explored the extent to which teachers are knowledgeable about response techniques for use with poetry. It also explored teachers attempts to change and their perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limit their ability to alter their current practices in teaching poetry.

### FINAL CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the research questions investigated in this study, the following conclusions can be made: the methods such as joint discussion and small groups and experiencing that teachers in the English program used were group oriented. Equally as highly rated by these teachers was the student centred/individual approach

of students experimenting with reading and interpreting the poem themselves. English Instruction teachers also favorably rated small groups and experiencing as favored methods. These methods tended to be small-group oriented but range from teacher-centred in the case of experiencing to student-centred in the case of small group work.

English Instruction teachers were less likely to use the teacher-centred/individual approaches of the teacher's telling students how to read and interpret the poem and strategy instruction whereby the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. Yet, while English instruction teachers appeared to be less likely to use teacher directed/individual methods in their classrooms, these methods were still supported by over half of teachers. English instruction teachers tended to place more emphasis on the students' being at the center of the instructional practice as the decision makers along with the teachers in the processes that were implemented in the classroom. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the student.

In the French Immersion program, teachers preferred methods of poetry instruction that were group centred: students'

experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, while led by the teacher, small groups where students read, discuss, and interpret the poem in groups, and joint discussion of the process for the reading and interpretation of the poetry. Strategy instruction was also favoured where the teacher directly teach the students strategies to read and interpret poetry. French Immersion teachers agreed with their English counterparts about being less willing to use the teacher telling the students how to read/interpret the poem based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

French Immersion teachers tended to encourage students to be at the center of the instructional practice as well as to be the decision maker along with the teacher in the processes that were implemented in the classroom. Poetry instruction was viewed as a negotiation between the teacher and the student where more student centred, group work approaches were utilized. The use of methods in which the teacher or the text solely guided the instruction were equally as unfavoured by teachers in the French Immersion program as by their teacher counterparts in the English program.

The data analysis of the tables showed no overwhelming, apparent preferences by teachers for the instruction of poetry in

their classrooms. In fact, the results demonstrate that the teachers surveyed didn't really know what it is that they did when they taught poetry in their classrooms. Teachers apparently did not discriminate between or among methods presented in the survey.

The qualitative survey data and the interviews clarified further what these teachers did when they taught poetry, since the quantitative survey results demonstrated that teachers agreed with using two contradictory methods and that they did not discriminate between either method specifically when they taught poetry in their classrooms. Teachers did show less of a preference for poetry instruction that is more teacher-centred than for that which is student-centred. Despite the tendency to rate teacher-centred approaches less favourably these approaches were still among the approaches that teachers supported and used in their classrooms. Student-centred approaches were favoured by teachers more than telling and strategy instruction which require more direct teaching by the teacher, with limited student involvement. Individual approaches tended to be less favoured than group work approaches to the instruction of poetry yet at the same time teachers agreed with the use of both individual and group methods at the same time. The interview questions explored and illuminated the extent to which

teachers were knowledgeable about response techniques for use with poetry as well as teachers' perceptions of the barriers and constraints which limited their ability to transform their current practice in teaching poetry. Poetry was used as either an isolated art form or as a part of the curriculum in the Language Arts program. Teachers concentrated on appreciation of poetry as an art form as well as encouraging students to express themselves in this medium. One third of teachers identified poetry as a major unit in their Language Arts program.

With respect to changes made in teaching practices, teachers identified the following four specific aspects: students were responsible for the changes that teachers made towards a more student-centred curriculum; the curriculum or method of instruction inspired change; experiences motivated change; and professional development including resource people, professional materials accounted for many changes in poetry instruction. Overwhelmingly half of teachers indicated that student-centred positive feedback determined whether teachers were pleased with the way that they taught poetry. Other identified elements that related to change were time and resources, experience, curriculum/methodology and professional development. If teachers thought about changing the

way that they taught poetry they identified the following as important elements: looking at a greater variety of poems, alternative approaches (i.e. thematic, integrated), allocating more time to the study of poetry, curriculum and methods; resources. Over one third of teachers had no opinion or thoughts about changing their program. Resources such as books, poetry anthologies, professional reading, collegial dialogue, theme-based units which include poetry in each theme were highlighted by teachers as the best way assistance in making change in their classrooms. Over half of the teachers did not know how they might go about changing if they were to make a change in how they taught poetry.

Even though teachers had difficulty articulating in the survey data what it was that they did to teach poetry, in the interviews they indicated they favoured more teacher-centred approaches. This was especially interesting given that the teachers to be interviewed were selected largely because of their cross-sectional responses to favoring the six different approaches.

Finally, it appeared from the interview that teacher-centred approaches were favoured even though the survey results showed them to be out of favour.

### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This research study investigated all of the Middle Years teachers, Grades 5 - 8, who taught English Language Arts in the English and French Immersion programs in a relatively small, suburban school division in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The selected school division had approximately 500 Kindergarten to grade 12 teachers during the period 1994 - 96. The school populations included a wide range of students from lower to upper class homes. At the time of the research, the school division had one French Immersion center and six schools that were dual - track which incorporated both French Immersion and English instruction programs. In the six dual - track schools, English programs comprised approximately 2/3 of the school population: French Immersion programs made up the remaining 1/3 of the student population.

As background information to the study, statistics on the current teaching grade level, the program of instruction (either English Language Arts or French Immersion English Language Arts), and the number of years of teaching experience of the teachers of grade 5 to 8 were collected and analyzed.

This descriptive survey research study polled the opinions of teachers with the explicit purpose of discovering teachers' behaviors, beliefs, and intentions with respect to the teaching of poetry. The study was designed to collect data on what methods Middle Years teachers currently used in teaching poetry to their students and what theoretical understandings drove their teaching practices. The goal of the study was to examine what teachers do in poetry instruction. Data were also collected on how teachers remember learning poetry in both their own Middle Years/Junior High experiences, and specifically how did their instruction in their teacher training inform their ideas about teaching poetry. The aspect of change was integrated into the questionnaire to see if teachers had changed and what encouraged this change to occur. As an added interest, a question was designed in this section to determine if teachers thought about changing how might they go about this change.

In exploring survey research with teachers, several limitations had to be considered by the researcher. First, the willingness and the ability of teachers to respond to the survey in a timely fashion and to the interview given the time demands on teachers needed to be considered. Second, the trust factor of

teachers. Teachers needed to be open to responding frankly to the survey and to the follow - up interview that examined further their specific teaching practices.

In addition, the small population of teachers in the selected metro school division who taught English Language Arts and French Immersion English Language Arts limited the number of potential responses. In addition, in this school division there had been limited numbers of teaching positions open over the past few years; therefore, the range of teaching experience available was narrow, with only one inexperienced teacher available to respond to the survey.

Generalizing from the research study was affected by the following characteristics of the research: a relatively small sample population extracted from the total target school division population, time of the year that the survey was conducted, the time that the survey took to complete, and the time duration of the interviews, the situation under which the respondents answered the survey, the time of day that they responded and under which surroundings all needed consideration. Last, the nature of survey research and the questions posed to collect the data needed to be considered in generalizing the results and relating them to other research studies.

Finally, the type of topic this research explored lent itself to becoming very pedantic or “preachy”, something that the researcher had to be conscious of in reporting the findings in the study.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

From this research study, one may conclude that, generally speaking, teachers really are unaware of what they do when they teach poetry. Nevertheless, poetry seemed to be a positive experience for both teachers and students when students participated in the lessons. In fact the greater the participation, the greater the satisfaction for the teacher. Those teachers who identified having successful experiences as well as those identifying changes to explore in their classrooms tended to achieve both these experiences because of the impact of the student feedback that had been solicited by the teacher. Therefore providing more opportunities for student input and voice would appear to benefit both the teacher and the students in the instruction of poetry in the classroom. These results could be accomplished through regular opportunities for student feedback. Student course evaluations or student interest inventories which given at the end of every poetry session or a summative evaluation at the end of the unit, could be used.

Teachers need support in teaching poetry to assist them in refining and developing their expertise and repertoire of strategies for best practice. The needs of teachers relate to teacher training, curriculum changes, collegial support, professional development, and time.

Initially when teachers are trained at university, a component of the teacher training needs to be a section on the best practices for the teaching of literature including poetry. This seemed to be an area that was lacking in the training of those teachers surveyed. Stronger leadership from Faculties of Education in this area would enhance the teaching of poetry in classrooms.

Teachers need to be much more familiar with the Provincial English Language Arts curriculum and allow it to inform their current practice. They need to make the necessary changes towards more student-centred approaches in their instructional practice providing that the provincial curriculum also encouraged such an orientation. The Department of Education should offer workshop training seminars to assist teachers in becoming proficient in the best teaching practices for response to literature including poetry.

Opportunities for professional development that would encourage collegial discussion, coaching, shadowing, and classroom

observation, the use of alternative and additional resource materials, professional development seminars that focus on best instructional practice would all encourage change and growth in the instruction of poetry. It is the joint responsibility of the teachers and their schools and school divisions to provide these types of professional opportunities.

Time is also a factor to enhancing the change process. Teachers need time to research and develop their programs. Teachers need time for professional dialogue and observation. Far too often such experiences occur as a haphazard approach where teachers "catch as catch can" in their preparation periods, over the lunch hour or after hours. For change to occur, time needs to be available to teachers to adequately plan and discuss with colleagues in order for the impact of changing their practices. School divisions and schools need to structure opportunities for professional dialogue to occur both within the teaching day and outside of contact hours. Such opportunities can only be worthwhile, however, if time is given to pursue them. In addition, teachers must be able to choose when to pursue these opportunities, so flexibility is required. It seems to me that perhaps a combined approach would reinforce the commitment of the school division, the school and the individual towards professional growth.

Overall, it is clear that teachers have reservations about making changes in their Language Arts program and especially their poetry instruction. The survey data show that when a teachers' methods work for them already, they are reluctant to change their teaching practices. Therefore, in order to assist teachers to make positive changes in their classrooms support is required. The ultimate success of a teachers' poetry program for the students may well depend on the extent to which supports are made available to encourage change.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are many ways that this research on poetry instruction could be further explored. One such would be a follow-up study of those teachers who identified being prepared to make changes, to see whether the identified changes occurred and what the enhancers and the inhibitors were to making these changes occur.

The opportunity to create cognitive coaching sessions that would focus on poetry instruction might encourage changes to be made or at the very least provide opportunities to observe in the teachers' classroom and provide feedback about the current practice. Such opportunities could foster reflection and lead to evaluation and

hence positive change, as classroom teacher and classroom observer discussed their perceptions. It would be critical that the observer be respectful of the teacher and recognize that he/she is the key to the classroom' s dynamic.

The researcher could undertake a fuller survey to see if the results of the current survey were representative of a larger population, and make generalizations that would be applicable to other school situations in other school divisions in the province and in Canada.

This research study strongly indicates the need for further research and development in the aspect of response techniques and their integration into classroom practice. There are but limited studies in this area. Additionally, opportunities to research further into the area of student voice and into ways to find opportunities in the classroom to make students' ideas and reactions part of their educational process is also important it is apparent that collaborative student-centred experiences have so many desirable results.

Finally, this research study points the way to further study of what precipitates teachers to change and what may be done to encourage teachers to make positive changes in their methods of teaching literature.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

- original survey

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current Teaching Level: Grade 5 6 7 8 (Please circle)

Program of Instruction: English Language Arts

French Immersion English Language Arts

Number of Years of Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you teach poetry to your students as part of their Language Arts program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?  
(indicate all that apply)

1. Teacher-led (teacher telling) \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

2. Students experiment \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

3. Students experience \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

4. Group Discussion \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

5. Teacher/Student generated \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

6. Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What does poetry mean to you?

4. In your personal Middle Years (Junior High education), how did you learn poetry?

5. In your teacher training, were you specifically taught how to teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5b) What methods were used to teach poetry to you in teacher training?

6. Has your methods of teaching poetry changed since you began teaching?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

6b) If so, how do you account for this change?

7. Are you pleased with the way you teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

7b) If so, why?

7c) If not, what would you like to change?

7d) How might you go about this change?

8. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

Please return this survey to Debra Radi @ Charleswood  
\* format used was a single '8 1/2 by 14' - double-sided sheet

APPENDIX B

- pilot study: B1 - letter to colleagues
- :B2 - survey

January 30, 1995

Dear Colleague,

I am in the process of completing my Masters thesis at the University of Manitoba in the area of Language Arts. To this end, I am conducting survey research of English Language Arts teachers to determine how they teach poetry to their Middle years students (grade 5 - 8). In order to have the best survey possible, I am requesting your assistance in piloting my survey and providing me with the following feedback;

- 1) How long did it take you to complete the survey?
  
- 2) Were there any questions that were unclear?
  
- 3) Are there any areas that you would like to suggest changes and why?
  
- 4) Other comments

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any further comments, please contact me at 254 - 1889 (h) or 889 - 9332 (w)

Yours truly,

Debra Radi

Please return by Monday, February 6th, 1995.

APPENDIX B

B2 - survey

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current Teaching Level: Grade 5 6 7 8 (Please circle)

Program of Instruction: English Language Arts

French Immersion English Language Arts

Number of Years of Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you teach poetry to your students as part of their Language Arts program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?  
(indicate all that apply)

1. Teacher-led (teacher telling) \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

2. Students experiment \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

3. Students experience \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

4. Group Discussion \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

5. Teacher/Student generated \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree

6. Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What does poetry mean to you?

4. In your personal Middle Years (Junior High education), how did you learn poetry?

5. In your teacher training, were you specifically taught how to teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5b) What methods were used to teach poetry to you in teacher training?

6. Has your methods of teaching poetry changed since you began teaching?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

6b) If so, how do you account for this change?

7. Are you pleased with the way you teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

7b) If so, why?

7c) If not, what would you like to change?

7d) How might you go about this change?

8. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

Please return this survey to Debra Radi @ Charleswood

\* format used was a single '8 1/2 by 14' - double-sided sheet

APPENDIX C

- revised survey after pilot study

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current Teaching Level: Grade 5 6 7 8 (Please circle)

Program of Instruction:  English Language Arts

(Please check)  French Immersion English Language Arts

Number of Years of Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you teach poetry to your students as part of their Language Arts program?

A lot \_\_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_  
 (>10 hours/cycle) (0 - 10 hrs/cycle) ( 0 hrs/cycle)

2. When you teach poetry, what is the major method that you use?

\* indicate the most preferred method

- as part of a separate unit       Yes    No

- as part of an integrated unit       Yes    No

\_ as part of a genre       Yes    No

- as a focus within another unit       Yes    No

3. Are these methods of teaching of poetry different or the same as you would use for any other genre in your Language Arts program?

4. In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

\*indicate all that apply

1. By teacher telling the students how to read/interpret the poem at hand with the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

2. By students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

3. By students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

4. By Group Discussion where students in small groups read/interpret

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

5. By Teacher/Student Negotiated reading/interpretation

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

6. By Strategy Instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read/interpret poetry

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

3. What role do you believe poetry has in the curriculum?

4. In your personal Middle Years/Junior High education, how did you remember learning poetry?

5. In your teacher training, were you specifically taught how to teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5b) If so, what methods were suggested for teaching poetry in teacher training?

6. Has your approach to teaching poetry changed since you began teaching?

Generally Yes \_\_\_ Generally No \_\_\_

6b) If so, how do you account for this change?

7. Are you generally pleased with the way you teach poetry?

For the most part \_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_ Not always \_\_\_

7b) Explain your answer.

7c) If you've thought about changing, what would you like to change?

7d) How might you go about this change?

8. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

Please return this survey to Debra Radi @ Charleswood

\* format used was a single '8 1/2 by 14' - double-sided sheet

APPENDIX D

D1 - letter to colleagues

April, 1995

Dear Colleague,

I am conducting a survey of all Middle Years Language Arts teachers from grade 5 to 9, who teach English Language Arts in English and French Immersion programs in Assiniboine South School Division.

As a Masters student at the University of Manitoba completing my Masters in Education degree in Language Arts, I am interested in discovering what Middle Years teacher practices and attitudes are in the teaching of poetry in their classrooms.

Attached you will find a survey with multiple choice and long answer questions that should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Please be as explicit as possible in your answers.

In order to maintain anonymity of the responses, I am not requesting your name and I will not be citing results according to individual responses. In order to conduct 8 one hour interviews as a follow-up to the survey, I have coded the survey sheets. Once the interview candidates have been chosen, the coding system will be destroyed. I can assure you that your name will not be used in any reporting of the results. You are under no obligation to complete this survey and you can withdraw from participation in this research project at any time without penalty. By completing this survey, you are acknowledging that you understand the intent of the study and giving your consent to participate.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results, please complete the interest response sheet and return it in the separate envelope provided. Once the results are published, I will forward a copy directly to you.

If you require additional information about the survey and/or the research project, please contact the undersigned at Charleswood Junior High @ 889-9332 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Stan Straw, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2 Telephone: 474-8089.

Thank you for your participation in this research project. I appreciate your assistance in the further development of Middle Years teaching practices.

Yours truly,

Debra Radi

\*\*\*\*\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in receiving a copy of the research results from the 'Middle Years teacher practices and attitudes in the teaching of poetry' thesis, once the results become available in the early fall of 1995.

Please return to Debra Radi @ Charleswood Junior High.

APPENDIX D

- D2 - survey

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current Teaching Level: Grade 5 6 7 8 (Please circle)

Program of Instruction:  English Language Arts

(Please check)  French Immersion English Language Arts

Number of Years of Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you teach poetry to your students as part of their Language Arts program?

A lot \_\_\_\_\_      Some \_\_\_\_\_      None \_\_\_\_\_  
 (>10 hours/cycle)    (0 - 10 hrs/cycle)    ( 0 hrs/cycle)

2. When you teach poetry, what is the major method that you use?

\* indicate the most preferred method

- as part of a separate unit      \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

- as part of an integrated unit      \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

\_ as part of a genre      \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

- as a focus within another unit      \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

3. Are these methods of teaching of poetry different or the same as you would use for any other genre in your Language Arts program?

4. In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

\*indicate all that apply

1. By teacher telling the students how to read/interpret the poem at hand with the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

2. By students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

3. By students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

4. By Group Discussion where students in small groups read/interpret

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

5. By Teacher/Student Negotiated reading/interpretation

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

6. By Strategy Instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read/interpret poetry

\_\_\_ Strongly Agree \_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

3. What role do you believe poetry has in the curriculum?

4. In your personal Middle Years/Junior High education, how did you remember learning poetry?

5. In your teacher training, were you specifically taught how to teach poetry?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5b) If so, what methods were suggested for teaching poetry in teacher training?

6. Has your approach to teaching poetry changed since you began teaching?

Generally Yes \_\_\_ Generally No \_\_\_

6b) If so, how do you account for this change?

7. Are you generally pleased with the way you teach poetry?

For the most part \_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_ Not always \_\_\_

7b) Explain your answer.

7c) If you've thought about changing, what would you like to change?

7d) How might you go about this change?

8. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

Please return this survey to Debra Radi @ Charleswood

\* format used was a single '8 1/2 by 14' - double-sided sheet

APPENDIX D  
D3 - follow-up letter to colleagues

June 6, 1995

Dear Colleague,

Several weeks ago, I sent you a request to complete a survey to facilitate my Masters thesis study that I am conducting about what Middle Years teachers practices and attitudes are with respect to poetry instruction. Unfortunately, to date, I have not received your survey.

As a researcher, I am very interested in hearing from you to gain as wide a perspective as possible of the teachers in Assiniboine South, I realize that this is a very busy time of the school year, but if you could take approximately 20 minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it to me @ Charleswood Junior High by June 12, 1995, I would gratefully appreciate it.

If you have already completed the survey, please accept my thanks for your participation and disregard this reminder.

Yours truly,

Debra Radi

## APPENDIX E - TABLES

E 1 - COMPARISONS OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION  
(English Program vs. French Immersion Program)

## E1 - TABLE 1 - TEACHER TELLING

| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=36) *        | 21 (58%) | 15 (42%) |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 7 (58%)  | 5 (42%)  |

## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

a) By having the teacher tell them how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning.

\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 36 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 37 in other categories.

## E1 - TABLE 2 - STUDENTS EXPERIMENTING

| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 34 (92%) | 3 (8%)   |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 10 (83%) | 2 (17%)  |

## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

b) By experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.

## E1 - TABLE 3 - STUDENTS EXPERIENCING

| Program of Instruction  | Agree     | Disagree |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 32 (86%)  | 5 (14%)  |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 12 (100%) | 0 (0%)   |

## Survey Question #4:

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

c) By students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher.

## E1 - TABLE 4 - STUDENTS IN SMALL GROUPS

| Program of Instruction  | Agree     | Disagree |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 33 (89%)  | 4 (11%)  |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 12 (100%) | 0 (0%)   |

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

d) By reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

## E1 - TABLE 5 - TEACHER &amp; STUDENT JOINT DISCUSSION

| Program of Instruction  | Agree    | Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=37)          | 36 (97%) | 1 (3%)   |
| French Immersion (N=12) | 11 (92%) | 1 (8%)   |

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

e) By teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

## E1 - TABLE 6 - STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

| Program of Instruction     | Agree    | Disagree |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
| English (N=35) *           | 23 (66%) | 12 (34%) |
| French Immersion (N=11) ** | 10 (91%) | 1 (9%)   |

## Survey Question #4

In your opinion, how do students read/interpret poetry best?

f) By strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 35 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 37 in other categories.

\*\* Note. The 'N' figure indicates the number of respondents who answered this question; the difference in the number shows that only 11 teachers responded to this question as opposed to 12 in other categories.

APPENDIX E  
E 2 - COMPARISONS OF METHODS OF TEACHING POETRY

E2 - TABLE 1 - TELLING and EXPERIMENTING

| Methods of Teaching Poetry | Telling  |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|
|                            | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree                      | 25 (50%) | 13 (26%) |
| Experimenting              |          |          |
| Disagree                   | 2 (4%)   | 3 (6%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND by having students experimenting with how to read/interpret the poem themselves.

## E2 - TABLE 2 - TELLING AND EXPERIENCING

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Telling  |          |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
|              |          | Agree    | Disagree |
| Experiencing | Agree    | 28 (56%) | 13 (26%) |
|              | Disagree | 0 (0%)   | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND with students experiencing with the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher.

## E2 - TABLE 3 - TELLING and SMALL GROUPS

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Telling  |          |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
|              |          | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree        |          | 26 (52%) | 13 (26%) |
| Small Groups |          |          |          |
|              | Disagree | 0 (0%)   | 2 (4%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher or instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND by students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

## E2 - TABLE 4 - TELLING and JOINT DISCUSSION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|                  | Telling  |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|
|                  | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree            | 27 (54%) | 15 (30%) |
| Joint Discussion |          |          |
| Disagree         | 0 (0%)   | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher of instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND by teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 5 - TELLING and STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|                      | Telling  |          |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
|                      | Agree    | Disagree |
| Agree                | 21 (42%) | 8 (16%)  |
| Strategy Instruction |          |          |
| Disagree             | 1 (2%)   | 11 (22%) |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having the teacher tell students how to read/interpret the poem at hand based on the teacher of instructional text interpretation of the meaning AND by strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 6 - EXPERIMENTING and EXPERIENCING

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

## Experimenting

Agree

Disagree

Agree

39 (78%)

4 (8%)

## Experiencing

Disagree

4 (8%)

0 (0%)

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by students experiencing with the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher.

## E2 - TABLE 7 - EXPERIMENTING and SMALL GROUPS

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|               | Small Groups |          |
|---------------|--------------|----------|
|               | Agree        | Disagree |
| Agree         | 40 (80%)     | 4 (8%)   |
| Experimenting |              |          |
| Disagree      | 0 (0%)       | 2 (4%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

## E2 - TABLE 8 - EXPERIMENTING and JOINT DISCUSSION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|               | Joint Discussion |          |
|---------------|------------------|----------|
|               | Agree            | Disagree |
| Agree         | 42 (84%)         | 4 (8%)   |
| Experimenting |                  |          |
| Disagree      | 0 (0%)           | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

E2 - TABLE 9 - EXPERIMENTING and STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

| Methods of Teaching Poetry |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|                            |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Experimenting              | Agree    | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 12 (24%)             | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experiment with how to read/interpret the poem AND by strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

E2 - TABLE 10 - EXPERIENCING and SMALL GROUPS

| Methods of Teaching Poetry |          | Small Groups |          |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                            |          | Agree        | Disagree |
| Experiencing               | Agree    | 41 (82%)     | 4 (8%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 1 (2%)       | 0 (0%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher AND by students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups.

## E2 - TABLE 11 - EXPERIENCING and JOINT DISCUSSION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Joint Discussion |          |
|--------------|----------|------------------|----------|
|              |          | Agree            | Disagree |
| Experiencing | Agree    | 42 (84%)         | 4 (8%)   |
|              | Disagree | 1 (2%)           | 0 (0%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher AND with teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 12 - EXPERIENCING and STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|--------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|              |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Agree        |          | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
| Experiencing |          |                      |          |
|              | Disagree | 11 (22%)             | 2 (4%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with having students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem, as lead by the teacher AND with strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 13 - SMALL GROUPS and JOINT DISCUSSION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              | Joint Discussion |          |
|--------------|------------------|----------|
|              | Agree            | Disagree |
| Agree        | 43 (86%)         | 2 (4%)   |
| Small Groups |                  |          |
| Disagree     | 1 (2%)           | 0 (0%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups AND with teacher & student joint discussion of the process for the reading & interpretation of the poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 14 - SMALL GROUPS and STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

## Methods of Teaching Poetry

|              | Strategy Instruction |          |
|--------------|----------------------|----------|
|              | Agree                | Disagree |
| Agree        | 30 (60%)             | 2 (4%)   |
| Small Groups |                      |          |
| Disagree     | 12 (24%)             | 0 (0%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with students reading, discussing, and interpreting the poem in small groups AND with strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

## E2 - TABLE 15 - JOINT DISCUSSION and STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

| Methods of Teaching Poetry |          | Strategy Instruction |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
|                            |          | Agree                | Disagree |
| Joint discussion           | Agree    | 33 (66%)             | 0 (0%)   |
|                            | Disagree | 12 (24%)             | 1 (2%)   |

This table displays the number of teachers who BOTH agree with teacher & student joint discussion AND with strategy instruction where the teacher directly teaches the students strategies to read & interpret poetry.

APPENDIX F  
Qualitative Survey Data

Survey Question #5:

What role does poetry have in your Language Arts program?

- 003 - appreciation
- 005 - expressive form
- 007 - more than it currently does now
- 008 - supplemental
- 011 - an important one!
- 012 - no answer (n/a)
- 013 - illustration of creative writing and as an alternative to prose
- 014 - (n/a)
- 018 - most important unit
- 019 - major component 15 - 20% of time
- 020 - (n/a)
- 021 - as a separate unit in literature
  - as a writing project
- 022 - prominent but usually timely (have to know kids first!)
- 024 - ongoing throughout the year- Although we generally concentrate on poetry for a period of time i.e. 3 cycles
- 026 - important - a method whereby the children develop an appreciation of language
- 027 - it is one of the literary genres I explore with my students
- 028 - I use different methods depending on the theme - art is used a lot as well
- 031 - enhances it
- 035 - appreciation of words & language in a way that students generally aren't exposed to
- 036 - to develop the appreciation of succinct thought sound, rhythm, & imagery
- 039 - (n/a)
- 040 - I place a major emphasis on poetry but I also integrate music. We listen to poetry set-to music. They do practised readings with taped music background or they prepare a tape as their presentation. They work individually or in groups.
- 041 - (n/a)
- 046 - to introduce students to various styles of poetry in the writing process
- 048 - I include poetry within all my L.A. program themes. This includes reading, writing, and studying various poetry formats and styles. L.A. themes are also connected to other curriculum areas as well.
- 051 - Kids learn the symbolism involved - use as references to other genres, express themselves through poetry, enjoy poetry

- 052 - An important role. It is important they develop an interest & appreciation for poetry, Exposure, discussion & activities involving poetry is a must.
- 055 - I introduce it as part of 'genre study units' and then we talk about it off & on all year
- 056 - I do lots of poetry, sometimes in small units, large units or a separate poem that ties in with a novel
- 058 - as a means of 'touching' life
- 059 - nil 94/95
- 061 - a minimum role
- 062 - it supports and expands our themes
- 063 - 2-3 months of school yr.
- 065 - somewhat minor part due to the time restraints in F.I. I would like to do more, but not enough time.
- 066 - an important role esp. where: 1) the students experience poetry by applying their own experiences through a hands-on approach. 2) the students listen poetry various forms being read to them. - identify different kinds - specify a (genre) \* poss. according to a theme (cinquain) -brainstorm possibilities - experiment (trial & error) - apply as it touches or affects their live - edit & revise - share & display
- 068 - minimal - it's used as a support to all themes, also for enjoyment
- 069 - I like to have students involved in writing rather sample types of poems with emphasis on economy of words, awareness of function of words (parts of speech), developing a 'picture', with very little emphasis on rhyme, etc.
- 070 - I use it in many areas, but also as a unit on its own.
- 075 - I hope it is part of all the themes and topics either by my finding poems/poetic forms or the students bringing in pieces.
- 077 - part of genre exposure
- 078 - In grade 7 not as large a role, as in grade eight
- 079 - I try to introduce poetry in a fun/educational way
  - major role - We look at several types, kids generate their own, analyze other poet's works, etc.
- 080 - It is part of the Grade 9 course
  - some children express themselves well through poetry
- 083 - exploration of a genre
- 084 - poetry is seen as a focus of expression, much like that of art-must be hands on
- 086 - as a separate unit - we learn figure of speech & integrate that with Lit. studies
- 091 - it increases the fun we can have with words when we play with them
- 092 - as a unit
- 0?? - self-expression, appreciation for others' efforts

## ANALYSIS:

## Survey Question #5.

What role does poetry have in your Language Arts program?

ART FORM: {15/50 - 30%} responded in this category

appreciation: [8/50 - 16%] responded

- 003 - appreciation
- 026 - important -a method whereby the children develop an appreciation of language
- 035 - appreciation of words & language in a way that students generally aren't exposed to
- 036 - to develop the appreciation of succinct thought, sound, rhythm, & imagery
- 052 - An important role. It is important they develop an interest & appreciation for poetry. Exposure, discussion & activities involving poetry is a must.
- 058 - as a means of 'touching life'
- 068 - minimal -it's used as a support to all themes, also for enjoyment
- 0?? - self-expression, appreciation for other's efforts

expressive: [8/50 - 16%] responded

- 005 - expressive form
- 013 - illustration of creative writing and as an alternative to prose
- 031 - enhances it
- 046 - to introduce students to various styles of poetry in the writing process
- 051 - kids learn the symbolism involved -use as references to other genres, express themselves through poetry, enjoy poetry
- 080 -it is part of the Grade 9 course
  - some children express themselves well through poetry
- 084 - poetry is seen as a focus of expression, much like that of art -must be hands on
- 0?? - self-expression, appreciation for other's efforts

CURRICULUM: {29/50 - 58%} responded in this category

supplemental: [4/50 - 8%] responded

- 008 - supplemental
- 061 - a minimum (minimal) role
- 065 - somewhat minor part due to the time restraints in F.I. I would like to do more, but not enough time.
- 078 - in grade 7 not as large a role, as in grade eight

major unit: [15/50 - 30%] responded

- 011 - an important one!
- 018 - most important unit
- 019 - major component 15 - 20% of time
- 022 - prominent but usually timely (have to know kids first!)
- 024 - ongoing throughout the year- Although we generally concentrate on poetry for a period of time i.e. 3 cycles (1 x 6 days)
- 026 - important -a method whereby the children develop an appreciation of language
- 040 - I place a major emphasis on poetry but I also integrate music. We listen to poetry set to music. They do practised readings with taped music background or they prepare a tape as their presentation. They work individually or in groups.
- 048 - I include poetry within all my L.A. program themes. This includes reading, writing, and studying various poetry formats and styles. L.A. themes are also connected to other curriculum areas as well.
- 052 - An important role. It is important they develop an interest & appreciation for poetry. Exposure, discussion & activities involving poetry is a must.
- 056 - I do lots of poetry, sometimes in small units, large units or a separate poem that ties in with a novel.
- 063 - 2-3 months of school yr.
- 066 - an important role esp. where: 1) the students experience poetry by applying their own experiences through a hands-on approach. 2) the students listen poetry various forms being read to them. identify different kinds - specify a (genre) \* poss. according to a theme (cinquain) - brainstorm possibilities - experiment (trial & error) -apply as it touches or affects their live -edit & revise - share & display
- 070 - I use it in many areas, but also as a unit on its own.
- 075 - I hope it is part of all the themes and topics either by my finding poems/poetic forms or the students bringing in pieces.
- 079 - I try to introduce poetry in a fun/educational way
  - major role - We look at several types, kids generate their own, analyze other poet's works, etc.

literary genre/separate unit: [9/50 - 18%]

- 021 - as a separate unit in literature
  - as a writing project
- 027 - it is one of the literary genres I explore with my students
- 055 - I introduce it as part of 'genre study units' and then we talk about it off & on all year
- 066 - an important role esp. where: 1) the students experience poetry by applying their own experiences through a hands-on approach. 2) the students listen poetry various forms being read to them. identify different

kinds - specify a (genre) \* poss. according to a theme (cinquain) -  
 brainstorm possibilities - experiment (trial & error) -apply as it  
 touches or affects their live -edit & revise - share & display -

- 070 - I use it in many areas, but also as a unit on its own.
- 077 - part of genre exposure
- 083 - exploration of a genre
- 086 - as a separate unit -we learn figure of speech & integrate that Lit. studies
- 092 - as a unit

integrated unit: [3/50 - 6%]

- 040 - I place a major emphasis on poetry but I also integrate music. We listen to poetry set to music. They do practised readings with taped music background or they prepare a tape as their presentation. They work individually or in groups.
- 056 - I do lots of poetry, sometimes in small units, large units or a separate poem that ties in with a novel.
- 070 - I use it in many areas, but also as a unit on its own.

thematic unit: [4/50 - 8%]

- 028 - I use different methods depending on the theme -art is used a lot as well
- 048 - I include poetry within all my L.A. program themes. This includes reading, writing, and studying various poetry formats and styles. L.A. themes are also connected to other curriculum areas as well.
- 062 - it supports and expands our themes
- 075 - I hope it is part of all the themes and topics either by my finding poems/poetic forms or the students bringing in pieces.

student centered focus: [6/50 - 12%]

- 022 - prominent but usually timely (have to know kids first)
- 066 - an important role esp. where: 1) the students experience poetry by applying their own experiences through a hands-on approach. 2) the students listen poetry various forms being read to them. identify different kinds - specify a (genre) \* poss. according to a theme (cinquain) - brainstorm possibilities - experiment (trial & error) -apply as it touches or affects their live -edit & revise - share & display
- 069 - I like to have students involved in writing, rather sample types of poems with emphasis on economy of words, awareness of function of words (parts of speech), developing a 'picture' with very little emphasis on rhyme, etc.
- 075 - I hope it is part of all the themes and topics either by my finding poems/poetic forms or the students bringing in pieces.

- 079 - I try to introduce poetry in a fun/educational way
  - major role - We look at several types, kids generate their own, analyze other poet's works, etc.
- 091 - it increases the fun we can have with words when we play with them

N/A: 6/50 (12%) respondents answered N/A

- 012 - no answer (n/a)
- 014 - (n/a)
- 020 - (n/a)
- 039 - (n/a)
- 041 - (n/a)
- 059 - nil 94/95

Survey Question # 8b) If so, how do you account for this change?

- 003 - more
- 005 - need to fit students
- 007 - no answer (n/a)
- 008 - I do less now because it is integrated into a couple of themes I have developed whereas I used to follow readers which of course have many poems in them
- 011 - experience, working with and learning from others: reading, inservice
- 012 - n/a
- 013 - experience
- 014 - n/a
- 018 - n/a
- 019 - experience - trial & error - P.D.
- 020 - an attempt to have students appreciate classical poems
- 021 - I do more now, than previously- probably have more confident teaching it now.
- 022 - just finding out what works & what doesn't
- 024 - try to incorporate poetry frequently because I have come to realize children love to write poetry
- 026 - most students have a very limited understanding of poetry
- 027 - I attended a workshop[ on teaching poetry in a cooperative and collaborative way, I've read professional materials regarding teaching poetry..
- 028 - workshop, my own interest
- 031 - co-operative learning - reading circles
- 035 - feel it is better appreciated the way I have presented lately
- 036 - n/a
- 039 - n/a

- 040 - Probably just what I found gave the most interest to students- if they got excited about it then it's a good system to use. If they're bored, scrap it!
- 041 - I have come to understand the importance of poetry in the developing of good communication skills, In allowing the students to express their feelings
- 046 - The more I read, the more I became aware of styles and differences
- 048 - Through the use of Whole Language ideas and strategies and various readings
- 051 - n/a
- 052 - experience, working with other & getting ideas through my own research.
- 055 - I have read articles and book on the teaching of poetry e.g. Georgia Heard's For the Good of the Earth and Sun
- 056 - I have discovered other ideas that I enjoy using
- 058 - n/a
- 059 - n/a
- 061 - The kids vary every year so my method of procedure varies somewhat to accommodate their needs, interests, etc.
- 062 - a resource teacher came to my class & taught poetry - I observed
- 063 - partner sharing - workshops (media center)
- 065 - n/a
- 066 - It has evolved more from a teacher-directed poetry-analysis type to a student based experimentation & enjoyment
- 068 - interest
- 069 - I've found it encouraging to see students 'construct meaning' for themselves ... and many are able to do it well.
- 070 - n/a
- 075 - I believe it has always been a focus. Maybe a greater emphasis on student group processes to support discussion & interpretation
- 077 - Due to change in L.A. program focus. Now is incorporated into Writers' Workshop style
- 078 - Time, and the students' needs, desires. Often poetry is the first and best method to reach a student
- 079 - Writer's Workshop-approach
  - Reading up-on poetry
  - Experience
- 080 - Less teacher centered.
- 083 - a greater personal understand of poetry and an awareness of student interest
- 084 - move from 'c' to 'b' & 'd'  
experience dictated that b & d work best
- 086 - I've allowed more freedom in interpretation. Sometimes all answers or interpretations are okay
- 091 - I've taken courses in Canadian Lit & English but more importantly - no equally important, I write myself

- 092 - n/a
- 0?? - more child centered  
freedom of self expression

#### ANALYSIS:

Survey Question #8b) If so, how do you account for this change?

Curriculum/Method: {8/50 - 16%} responded to this category

- 031 - co-operative learning - reading circles
- 046 - The more I read, the more I became aware of styles and differences
- 048 - Through the use of Whole Language ideas and strategies and various readings
- 077 - Due to change in L.A. program focus. Now is incorporated into Writers' Workshop style
- 079 - Writer's Workshop-approach
  - Reading up on poetry
  - Experience
- 084 - move from 'c'(students experiencing the reading) to 'b'(students experimenting) & 'd' (students reading, etc. in small groups) experience dictated that b & d work best
- 086 - I've allowed more freedom in interpretation. Sometimes all answers or interpretations are okay
- 091 - I've taken courses in Canadian Lit & English but more importantly - no equally important, I write myself

Student-centered: {16/50 - 32%}

- 005 - need to fit students
- 020 - an attempt to have students appreciate classical poems
- 024 - try to incorporate poetry frequently because I have come to realize children love to write poetry
- 026 - most students have a very limited understanding of poetry
- 035 - feel it is better appreciated the way I have presented lately
- 040 - Probably just what I found gave the most interest to students- if they got excited about it then it's a good system to use. If they're bored, scrap it!
- 041 - I have come to understand the importance of poetry in the developing of good communication skills, In allowing the students to express their feelings
- 061 - The kids vary every year so my method of procedure varies somewhat to accommodate their needs, interests, etc.
- 066 - It has evolved more from a teacher-directed poetry-analysis type to a student-based experimentation & enjoyment
- 068 - interest

- 069 - I've found it encouraging to see students 'construct meaning' for themselves ... and many are able to do it well.
  - 075 - I believe it has always been a focus. Maybe a greater emphasis on student group processes to support discussion & interpretation
  - 078 - Time, and the students' needs, desires. Often poetry is the first and best method to reach a student
  - 080 - Less teacher centered
  - 083 - a greater personal understand of poetry and an awareness of student interest
  - 0?? - more child centered  
freedom of self expression
- Experience: {9/50 - 18%}

- 011 - experience, working with and learning from others: reading, inservice
- 013 - experience
- 019 - experience - trial & error - P.D.
- 022 - just finding out what works & what doesn't
- 052 - experience, working with other & getting ideas through my own research.
- 062 - a resource teacher came to my class & taught poetry - I observed
- 063 - partner sharing - workshops (media center)
- 079 - Writer's Workshop-approach
  - Reading up on poetry
  - Experience
- 084 - move from 'c' to 'b' & 'd'  
experience dictated that b & d work best

Professional Development: {11/50 22%}

- 019 - experience - trial & error - P.D.
- 027 - I attended a workshop[ on teaching poetry in a cooperative and collaborative way, I've read professional materials regarding teaching poetry.
- 028 - workshop, my own interest
- 046 - The more I read, the more I became aware of styles and differences
- 048 - Through the use of Whole Language ideas and strategies and various readings
- 052 - experience, working with other & getting ideas through my own research.
- 055 - I have read articles and book on the teaching of poetry e.g. Georgia Heard's For the Good of the Earth and Sun
- 056 - I have discovered other ideas that I enjoy using
- 062 - a resource teacher came to my class & taught poetry - I observed
- 063 - partner sharing - workshops (media center)

N/A: {12/50 - 24%} of respondents could not account for why they made the change.

- 007 - no answer (n/a)
- 012 - n/a
- 014 - n/a
- 018 - n/a
- 036 - n/a
- 039 - n/a
- 051 - n/a
- 058 - n/a
- 059 - n/a
- 065 - n/a
- 070 - n/a
- 092 - n/a

Survey Question #9:

Are you generally pleased with the way you teach poetry?

b) Explain your answer

- 003 - n/a
- 005 - We create more than we interpret.
- 007 - I need more & fresh work on poetry (inservice with new ideas)
- 008 - Sometimes the students enjoy the poems, other times it feels like pulling teeth. Then everything drags.
- 011 - I value what I get from them. Kids seem to enjoy both reading & writing: seem interested and are willing to look at possibilities reading & writing of poetry pleasant!
- 012 - lack of experience
- 013 - nothing is perfect
- 014 - This is only my second year I'm working on developing my unit, etc.
- 018 - feel/know my students are more than ready for high school & university classes
- 019 - increase time
- 020 - bad year
- 021 - Perhaps not enough variety in teaching methods
- 022 - generally students enjoy it & are enthusiastic
- 024 - I would feel more comfortable if I had some current info on preferred methods of teaching poetry
- 026 - depends on the response of the class
- 027 - The students usually have a negative attitude at the start and by the end of the unit most have enjoyed it.
- 028 - I try to mix creatively, artistic impression and teaching certain forms.

- 031 - I like it when the students think
- 035 - Seem to have difficulty determining if the class is able to handle/appreciate poetry
- 036 - It is something we can experience together as a large group[. It is kinetic- I use movement (as in Orff) - the kids love to move with the words
- 039 - n/a
- 040 - I find kids enjoy the poetry I do with them & they write wonderful poems as a result
- 041 - hands on
- 046 - I so not feel comfortable with this area
- 048 - I'm always searching out new ideas and strategies
- 051 - not sure what approach to take
- 052 - I encourage the students to create their own following many examples shared & studied) & to proudly store them in a personalized Poetry Portfolio
- 055 - the students enjoy it and begin to develop poems as part of Writer's Workshop
- 056 - I thin that my love of poetry is appreciated and accepted by the students thereby encouraging them to appreciate poetry.
- 058 - I try to let poetry speak for itself while making it possible for students to become aware of poetic devices
- 059 - n/a
- 061 - n/a
- 062 - pretty well "by gosh and by golly" but I enjoy poetry & my students seem to like it too
- 063 - kids are enthusiastic
- 065 - I would like to teach more, but find I must do much of the hunting. A good poetry collection would be handy as a recommended text.
- 066 - I believe I've refined my approach as I've gone along, often based on student responses and reactions. A strong goal is for them to enjoy it!
- 068 - Kids like to read a variety of different material- I believe its' important that they do!
- 069 - Students understand what they "work through" leaving them with a sense of having ability & skill
- 070 - Children seem to come to a greater appreciation & understanding of poetry
- 075 - Students seem to enjoy Poetry! (my #1 Goal) all are more open to it and some discover a new form/genre
- 077 - Students are exposed to a variety of styles-then produce their own anthology
- 078 - never enough resources, never enough time

- 079 - The kids even the boys, get hooked, they create a poetry collection & enjoy doing it. Comments from kids "Poetry isn't just mushy!" Rubrics designed for evaluation, Teacher & Student. Parental input is used as well.
- 080 - I depends on how it goes over with the students -some groups good others not so good
- 083 - students will follow-up poetry lessons with their own explorations of poetry
- 084 - students actively participate and willingly write poetry
- 086 - We've chosen a lot of good poems over the year. The students really enjoy writing poetry. I've enjoyed searching for some really good poems
- 091 - I think if you have the enthusiasm for something it is undeniably infectious
- 092 - Would do it as an integrated component in the future
- 0?? - time a problem -too little
  - should I edit?
  - Should I give it a choice or form?

## ANALYSIS;

Survey Question #9: Are you generally pleased with the way you teach poetry?

## b) Explain your answer

For the most part \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Not always \_\_\_\_

Time & Resources: {4/50 - 8%}

- 065 - for the most part
  - I would like to teach more, but find I must do much of the hunting. A good poetry collection would be handy as a recommended text.
- 078 - sometimes - never enough resources, never enough time
- 0?? - sometimes -time a problem -too little
  - should I edit?
  - Should I give it a choice or form?
- 020 -not always - bad year

Experience: {3/50 - 6%}

- 014 - for the most part -This is only my second year I'm working on developing my unit, etc.
- 012 - sometimes -lack of experience
- 013 - sometimes -nothing is perfect

## Curriculum/Methodology: {14/50 - 28%}

## For the most part: {6/50 - 12%}

- 028 - for the most part -I try to mix creatively, artistic impression and teaching certain forms.
- 041 - for the most part -hands on
- 048 - for the most part -I'm always searching out new ideas and strategies
- 058 - for the most part -I try to let poetry speak for itself while making it possible for students to become aware of poetic devices
- 079 - for the most part -The kids even the boys, get hooked, they create a poetry collection & enjoy doing it. Comments from kids "Poetry isn't just mushy!" Rubrics designed for evaluation, Teacher & Student. Parental input is used as well.
- 091 - for the most part - I think if you have the enthusiasm for something it is undeniably infectious

## Sometimes: {6/50 - 12%}

- 005 - sometimes -We create more than we interpret.
- 021 - sometimes -Perhaps not enough variety in teaching methods
- 024 - sometimes - I would feel more comfortable if I had some current info on preferred methods of teaching poetry
- 066 - sometimes -I believe I've refined my approach as I've gone along, often based on student responses and reactions. A strong goal is for them to enjoy it!
- 092 - sometimes -Would do it as an integrated component in the future
- 0?? - sometimes -time a problem -too little
  - should I edit?
  - Should I give it a choice or form?

## Not always: {2/50 - 4%}

- 046 - not always -I so not feel comfortable with this area
- 051 - not always -not sure what approach to take

## Professional Development: {1/50 - 2%}

- 007 - not always- I need more & fresh work on poetry (in service with new ideas)

## Student-centered: {27/50 - 54%}

For the most part: {21/50 - 42%}

- 011 - for the most part -I value what I get from them. Kids seem to enjoy both reading & writing: seem interested and are willing to look at possibilities reading & writing of poetry pleasant!
- 018 - for the most part -feel/know my students are more than ready for high school & university classes
- 022 - for the most part -generally students enjoy it & are enthusiastic
- 027 - for the most part -The students usually have a negative attitude at the start and by the end of the unit most have enjoyed it.
- 031 - for the most part -I like it when the students think
- 036 - for the most part -It is something we can experience together as a large group. It is kinetic- I use movement (as in Orff) - the kids love to move with the words
- 040 - for the most part -I find kids enjoy the poetry I do with them & they write wonderful poems as a result
- 052 - for the most part -I encourage the students to create their own following many examples shared & studied & to proudly store them in a personalized Poetry Portfolio
- 055 - for the most part -the students enjoy it and begin to develop poems as part of Writer's Workshop
- 056 - for the most part -I think that my love of poetry is appreciated and accepted by the students thereby encouraging them to appreciate poetry.
- 058 - for the most part -I try to let poetry speak for itself while making it possible for students to become aware of poetic devices
- 063 - for the most part -kids are enthusiastic
- 068 - for the most part -Kids like to read a variety of different material- I believe its' important that they do!
- 069 - for the most part -Students understand what they "work through" leaving them with a sense of having ability & skill
- 070 - for the most part -Children seem to come to a greater appreciation & understanding of poetry
- 075 - for the most part -Students seem to enjoy Poetry! (my #1 Goal) all are more open to it and some discover a new form/genre
- 077 - for the most part -Students are exposed to a variety of styles-then produce their own anthology
- 079 - for the most part -The kids even the boys, get hooked, they create a poetry collection & enjoy doing it. Comments from kids "Poetry isn't just mushy!" Rubrics designed for evaluation, Teacher & Student. Parental input is used as well.
- 083 - for the most part -students will follow-up poetry lessons with their own explorations of poetry
- 084 - for the most part -students actively participate and willingly write poetry

086 - for the most part -We've chosen a lot of good poems over the year. The students really enjoy writing poetry. I've enjoyed searching for some really good poems

Sometimes: {6/50 - 12%}

008 - sometimes -Sometimes the students enjoy the poems, other times it feels like pulling teeth. Then everything drags.

026 - sometimes -depends on the response of the class

035 - sometimes -Seem to have difficulty determining if the class is able to handle/appreciate poetry

062 - sometimes -pretty well "by gosh and by gully" but I enjoy poetry & my students seem to like it too

066 - sometimes -I believe I've refined my approach as I've gone along, often based on student responses and reactions. A strong goal is for them to enjoy it!

080 - sometimes -I depends on how it goes over with the students -some groups good others not so good

N/A: 4/50 (8%)didn't know if they were generally pleased?

019 - for the most part -yes- n/a

003 - sometimes -n/a

039 - sometimes -n/a

061 - sometimes -n/a

059 - no answer -n/a

Survey Question # 9c) If you've thought about changing the way you teach poetry, what would you like to change?

003 - n/a

005 - n/a

007 - everything

008 - n/a

011 - more variety; more writing

012 - n/a

013 - make it more thematic

014 - n/a

018 - vary techniques to include group discovery student selected/written poems

019 - increase time

020 - n/a

021 - explore alternative methods for teaching poetry

- expose students to a greater number & wide variety of poems

022 - n/a

- 024 - need more information-but know I would like high interest selections and teacher guide
- 026 - introduce more poetry at an earlier age
- 027 - Perhaps read poems more often to the class for enjoyment
- 028 - try new things
- 031 - n/a
- 035 - use resources more
- 036 - do more often
- 039 - n/a
- 040 - I wish I had more time to do more
- 041 - no
- 046 - n/a
- 048 - I'm not sure. Sharing ideas or being exposed to various methods and programs helps one to set goals for change.
- 051 - unsure
- 052 - Integrating it more with all the subjects
- 055 - I would like to collect
- 056 - n/a
- 058 - n/a
- 059 - n/a
- 061 - n/a
- 062 - more access to good poems
  - different methods of presenting
- 063 - n/a
- 065 - n/a
- 066 - do more of it
- 068 - more time!
  
- 069 - Have students read a variety of poems at various periods throughout the year
- 070 - I'd like to see other methods to incorporate some new ideas.
- 075 - fewer time constraints, visiting poets, etc.
- 077 - Incorporate more of student exposure of/to different poetry anthologies. Allow them to choose ones they like- and explain why they liked it. Not so much what the poems are about, but more why poems appealed to them.
- 078 - n/a
- 079 - Right now I'm pleased with it!
- 080 - I might like to know more about poetry in general
- 083 - nothing at present time
- 084 - give student more time and freedom to create poetry in its various forms
- 086 - n/a
- 091 - I'd like to do more & cover genre better. Ballads, rhymes, epics, etc.

- 092 - (as above) would do it as an integrated component in the future
- 0?? - (the above) -time a problem - too little - should I edit? -should I give it a choice or form?

#### ANALYSIS:

Survey Question #9c: If you've thought about changing the way you teach poetry, what would you like to change?

Curriculum / Methodology: {20/50 - 40%}

- 007 - everything
- 013 - make it more thematic
- 018 - vary techniques to include group discovery student selected/written poems
- 021 - explore alternative methods for teaching poetry
  - expose students to a greater number & wide variety of poems
- 024 - need more information-but know I would like high interest selections and teacher guide
- 026 - introduce more poetry at an earlier age
- 027 - Perhaps read poems more often to the class for enjoyment
- 028 - try new things
- 048 - I'm not sure. Sharing ideas or being exposed to various methods and programs helps one to set goals for change.
- 052 - Integrating it more with all the subjects
- 062 - more access to good poems
  - different methods of presenting
- 069 - Have students read a variety of poems at various periods throughout the year
- 070 - I'd like to see other methods to incorporate some new ideas.
- 075 - fewer time constraints, visiting poets, etc.
- 077 - Incorporate more of student exposure of/to different poetry anthologies. Allow them to choose ones they like- and explain why they liked it. Not so much what the poems are about, but more why poems appealed to them.
- 080 - I might like to know more about poetry in general
- 084 - give student more time and freedom to create poetry in its various forms
- 091 - I'd like to do more & cover genre better. Ballads, rhymes, epics, etc.
- 092 - (as above) would do it as an integrated component in the future
- 0?? - (the above) -time a problem - too little - should I edit? -should I give it a choice or form?

Resources: {3/50 - 6%}

- 011 - more variety; more writing
- 035 - use resources more
- 055 - I would like to collect

Time: {6/50 - 12%}

- 019 - increase time
- 036 - do more often
- 040 - I wish I had more time to do more
- 066 - do more of it
- 068 - more time!
- 0?? - (the above) -time a problem - too little - should I edit? -should I give it a choice or form?

Pleased / No change @ present: {4/50 - 8%}

- 041 - no
- 051 - unsure
- 079 - Right now I'm pleased with it!
- 083 - nothing at present time

n/a: 16/50 (32%) have no opinion - nor thought about changing or what they would like to change

- 003 - n/a
- 005 - n/a
- 008 - n/a
- 012 - n/a
- 014 - n/a
- 020 - n/a
- 022 - n/a
- 031 - n/a
- 039 - n/a
- 046 - n/a
- 056 - n/a
- 058 - n/a
- 059 - n/a
- 061 - n/a
- 063 - n/a
- 065 - n/a
- 078 - n/a
- 086 - n/a

## Survey Question # 9d) How might you go about making this change?

- 003 - n/a
- 005 - n/a
- 007 - We have sacrificed poetry (a thing of Beauty & Love) for computers & technology
- 008 - n/a
- 011 - add time; do more reading
- 012 - n/a
- 013 - include poetry with other units
- 014 - n/a
- 018 - courage
- 019 - get more time
- 020 - do not have answers - dependent upon the class - the process in interactive
  - teacher & students & material
- 021 - professional reading
  - dialogue with colleagues
  - collect more resources
- 022 - n/a
- 024 - ?
- 026 - n/a
- 027 - n/a
- 028 - talk to other teachers
- 031 - n/a
- 035 - find good resource books
- 036 - planning
- 039 - n/a
- 040 - n/a
- 041 - n/a
- 046 - n/a
- 048 - take advantage of any opportunities to gain new information. Networking, workshops, a course, etc.
- 051 - n/a
- 052 - Taking the extra time to organize this
- 055 - Buy some more resource books - save children's work
- 056 - n/a
- 058 - n/a
- 059 - n/a
- 061 - n/a
- 062 - I'd like to see teachers who like to teach poetry at work
- 063 - n/a
- 065 - n/a

- 066 - Read more of a variety from various authors, analyze & interpret poetry with the students
- 068 - n/a
- 069 - I would need to begin by developing an anthology of poems -
- 070 - By visiting other classrooms
- 075 - teacher-teacher connections within & across schools, and/or poetry workshops for students
- 077 - n/a
- 078 - n/a
- 079 - n/a
- 080 - course in poetry
- 083 - n/a
- 084 - creating the environment that is conducive to this activity
- 086 - n/a
- 091 - n/a
- 092 - use more theme based units - include poetry within each theme
- 0?? - have to think on that

#### ANALYSIS:

Survey Question #9d) How might you go about making this change?

Curriculum / Methodology: {5/50 - 10%}

- 013 - include poetry with other units
- 020 - do not have answers - dependent upon the class - the process is interactive
  - teacher & students & material
- 070 - By visiting other classrooms
- 075 - teacher-teacher connections within & across schools, and/or poetry workshops for students
- 084 - creating the environment that is conducive to this activity

Time: {4/50 - 8%}

- 007 - We have sacrificed poetry (a thing of Beauty & Love) for computers & technology
- 011 - add time; do more reading
- 019 - get more time
- 052 - Taking the extra time to organize this

Resources: {9/50 - 18%}

- 011 - add time; do more reading
- 020 - do not have answers - dependent upon the class - the process is interactive
  - teacher & students & material
- 021 - professional reading
  - dialogue with colleagues
  - collect more resources
- 035 - find good resource books
- 036 - planning
- 055 - Buy some more resource books - save children's work
- 066 - Read more of a variety from various authors, analyze & interpret poetry with the students
- 069 - I would need to begin by developing an anthology of poems
- 092 - use more theme based units - include poetry within each theme

Professional Development: {6/50 - 12%}

- 028 - talk to other teachers
- 036 - planning
- 048 - take advantage of any opportunities to gain new information. Networking, workshops, a course, etc.
- 070 - By visiting other classrooms
- 075 - teacher-teacher connections within & across schools, and/or poetry workshops for students
- 080 - course in poetry

Personal: {2/50 - 4%}

- 018 - courage
- 0?? - have to think on that

N/A: 28/50 (56%) of teachers do not know how they might go about changing if they were to make a change in how they teach poetry?????

- 003 - n/a
- 005 - n/a
- 008 - n/a
- 012 - n/a

014 - n/a  
022 - n/a  
024 - ?  
026 - n/a  
027 - n/a  
031 - n/a  
039 - n/a  
040 - n/a  
041 - n/a  
046 - n/a  
051 - n/a  
056 - n/a  
058 - n/a  
059 - n/a  
061 - n/a  
063 - n/a  
065 - n/a  
068 - n/a  
077 - n/a  
078 - n/a  
079 - n/a  
083 - n/a  
086 - n/a  
091 - n/a

**Other comments:**

- 024 - It seems to me the teaching of poetry has been neglected in the last few years. Even filling out this survey has rekindled some interest.
- 028 - It's one of my favorite subjects to teach! I enjoy seeing the creativity come out! They always come up with things that I would never think of. I always put a book of poetry together at the end of the year.
- 058 - Poetry is wonderful!
- 065 - Most important I would love to get some good, appropriate poems in French for French L.A. This is the weakest part of my repertoire.
- 079 - I love poetry!

APPENDIX G  
Interview protocol

The interviews that were conducted with seven interviewees focussed on the following questions or question types;

1) The first question was directly related to the survey that the interviewee had completed and was designed to seek clarification of the response and additionally to gain insight into classroom practice.

An example of this type is:

Thank you for offering to be interviewed. I really appreciate it. What I'm interested in is in your survey you indicated that the way that you would have students read and interpret poetry is that you think students read and interpret poetry best is by reading and discussing and interpreting the poem in small groups. I am wondering what that might look like in practice in your classroom and if you could describe for me what a poetry lesson or what your poetry unit was like.

2) The second type of question was related to seeking further clarification with a question related directly to the information that the teacher had shared with the interviewer to seek a deeper understanding of the processes used. An example of this type would be:

So then you did a lot of large group instruction to start off with with teacher direction and then did they do some small group work?

3) Subsequently questions of the goals and student impact were asked. The goal of this question was to determine how well articulated the teachers' goals were and how the students were involved in that decision making. An example of this type would be:

Could you tell me a little bit more about the goals of poetry in your Language Arts program what were you looking at in terms of having the students exposed to poetry and sort of what you were hoping to get there.

4) The next question focussed on the element of change and impact in the classroom. An example of this type of question is:

As you were looking at your poetry program I also noticed that you talked about making some changes in the way that you taught poetry, could you talk a little bit about what those changes might look like?

5) This question was designed to address how change occurred and the elements that aided in the change occurring in the classroom setting. An example of this type of question is:

What do you think helped you come to that realization that those were the changes that you would like to make?

&/or

What do you think might be more helpful to help you make those changes in your Language Arts class?

6) The final question was designed to address any other aspects of the interviewee's poetry program that was not yet discussed or any other aspects of poetry instruction that they wished to address. An example of this type of question would be:

Is there anything else that you would like to add about poetry instruction or things that we haven't covered?

Throughout the interview process the interviewer used techniques such as pause, verbalizations such as uh-huh and yes and non - verbal cues such as head nods and eye movement to encourage the interviewee to continue to discuss the area that they were addressing at the time.

APPENDIX H  
Interviews

Seven interviews were conducted with the following interviewees:

|              |           |              |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Interview #1 | - Cathy   | Survey # 018 |
| Interview #2 | - Marvin  | Survey # 020 |
| Interview #3 | - Wade    | Survey # 021 |
| Interview #4 | - Robert  | Survey # 022 |
| Interview #5 | - Marj    | Survey # 011 |
| Interview #6 | - Sally   | Survey # 059 |
| Interview #7 | - Dillion | Survey # 092 |

Pseudonyms have been used to ensure the confidentiality of the interviewees in the interview process.

INTERVIEW #1

D. R. : Hi, Cathy. Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed. I really appreciate it. What I'm interested in, Cathy, is one of the responses that you gave to the survey, was that you strongly agree with having your students experience the reading and interpretation of the poem as lead by the teacher. I'm wondering if you could discuss that for me and let me know a little more how that works in your classroom.

Cathy: O. K. I think the first thing is that particular age group that I'm dealing with, a lot of them don't have experience with poetry and if they have experience with poetry it hasn't been a positive experience. That's probably often because the teacher who's teaching it themselves doesn't have a good feel for it. For a lot of teachers it is sort of an add on unit that they do the last couple of weeks of the year. Whereas for me, it is sort of probably one of the two main focuses of my entire year as far as teaching goes. I think I have a number of different purposes to poetry. The first thing is to get kids to learn to enjoy the poetry itself. In order to do that they need to know what goes into making up a poem. And sometimes it's just an expression of one's experience but even in order to get that across effectively there's a lot of different techniques that they use. I think a lot of times even the poet themselves don't know exactly what that technique is. But, in any case, as a student, I'm hoping that they'll particularly learn to appreciate poetry. Also, it works on the imaginative side of their minds as opposed to the critical side. In that sense, they don't often get an opportunity to do in the other classes so that's something that they really need to develop and to express in English language arts classes. So, I guess those are the two main things to enjoy the poetry itself. Second of all, to get ready to use that other side of their mind. And then of course, all of these techniques can be supported can also be transferred over to prose, as well.

DR: O.K. Thank you. Can you explain for me or describe for me what a poetry lesson might look like in your class?

Cathy: The typical lesson, assuming that I had finished off another poem the previous class would be first of all, I'll read or I'll have one of the kids read the poem at least once and then I'll probably read it a second time and then of course ???? as well. So that's what happens first and then we go through basically talking about theme and thesis what's the poem about which most kids can get it's about love or about peace or whatever. Then try to delve into it deeper exactly what he's saying about love or peace or war or whatever it might be. After that we'd talk about what kind of mood is created by the poem and whether it changes and, you know, does the poet express it effectively. Then we go through a series of techniques starting with some of the simple stuff like some rhyme, some rhythm, why that particular rhyme scheme, some of the rhythm of some of the poems: Is it fast, is it slow, is it medium, does it change? And then we'll get into some simile, and metaphor, and so on. Basically it's pointing them out from there. And then what I find is that as we go thorough and do this for each of the set of poems it transfers into when they write their own poems. At the beginning, they have no effect and is random all kinds of stuff that they thought was kind of neat but when they actually saw it in a poem and recognized it now that they have that information they can use it whereas, you know, if they hadn't gone through the process they never would have found this. The other thing is that I usually do before we even start the poem is I'll tell them something about the poet or something about the time that the poet was writing in so that they can read it and that's I guess because of my historical background and also as a sort of why he is writing this style of poem

and in this topic of the poem and that's another of my goal that I try to bring out.

D.R. : Based on the goals that you talked about earlier, your two goals one about student appreciation for poetry and your secondary goal, how do you think the students respond to the way that you teach poetry?

Cathy Well, I guess there's two ways to sort of see that. One thing is to see is that I do a series of passages and going through sight poems and at the beginning, of course, they don't know that much but by the end they have learned a lot of skills and I mean that's the good students for sure but it's also the bad students and I think, you know, that that's one good thing and that is that I'm getting something across to them in terms of techniques. Second of all, the length of poems they're writing, the quality of poems, the techniques that are going into the poems have also developed so I mean that I make that statement not only on an analytical level but also on a creative level which is again more of which I was going for. And I also see it in subsequent work with them using more metaphors and similes in their regular writing.

D.R. So, there's also the transfer then from poetry into other areas?

Cathy Yes, into prose.

D.R. Right. One of the other areas that I'm also interested in is

that you talked a little bit in your survey about changing, changing some of the ways that you might respond to poetry and varying some of the techniques. I guess, I'm wondering if you have tried any of that or thought any more about that and what you might do. I was interested in your response because you mentioned courage - the courage to do it and I think that that's probably a really strong point in terms of change. Could you describe for me or have you thought any more about that?

Cathy I haven't thought any more about it. The problem I have is that I am basically a very conservative teacher in terms of once I have something good I tend to stick with it and not change it unless some other force makes me, whether that be a change in curriculum or whatever. I guess that what I do is I try to perfect what I have and just change that around. So in terms of the poetry, what I do in terms of change is I'll try to change three or four poems each year so that it's a little bit fresh for me in that sense but still keep the same basic patterns. What I'd like to do is probably not so much change the poetry or the poems themselves but vary the method of attack because the method that I described last year or previously is what I tend to do all the time and sometimes it might be better to do a bit of group work or something like that or just doing their own individual analysis of the poem while not having me sort of superimpose mine all the time. Perhaps that's something I need to do more in the second part is to give them more of a chance to discover and to analyze on their own.

D.R. You mentioned earlier some of the things that might help you make that change would be somebody else imposing it either through curricular changes or whatever. What might help you make those changes that you just discussed now?

Cathy One thing that I'd like to do is to visit other classes and obviously some particular poetry classes and just see how everything is happening. I tend to be a pretty good imitator so if I can see something that I can imitate I'll try it but just to sort of say O.K. now try it in a group. I feel uncomfortable doing that without seeing how someone else does that then I can maybe combine the two ideas. But, just saying O.K. we'll now get into groups, doesn't feel comfortable.

D.R. Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your poetry instruction?

Cathy No. No, I don't think so.

D.R. Thank you for the interview.

## INTERVIEW # 2

D.R. Hi, Marvin. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today, I really appreciate it. What I'm interested in, in the research, is I'm interested in knowing more about the poetry instruction that you do in your classes with your students. I wondered if you could describe to me what that might look like if I was in your class.

Marvin First of all, what I am doing this year I'll probably use as the basis for the discussion and there's a change from what I had started with. So, if you had come into the class this morning, for example, you would have seen the students coming into the class this morning with a rough draft of a poem that they had put together yesterday. The only sort of basis that they had for that was exposure to some poems already. All of which fit into the theme of their unit which is change and this is grade 8 that we are talking about by the way.

D.R. Could you describe for me what that exposure looks like in your classroom?

Marvin You want more detail?

D.R. Ya, you had mentioned that you had used some exposure, I'm wondering what that looked like ?

Marvin I'm not sure where to start here. One of the aspects of the exposure was that I put. Oh! Sorry. The first thing that we did was I gave them one poem. It was called When I was Fifteen. It was about a young boy who was fifteen who was going to school probably for the first time as they were last week and he's trying to be cool and learn how to not only carry his gym bag but drop it in such a way that he'll be Mr. Cool. He's hoping that the girls will notice. So we sort of explored that not in great detail it was as much to sort of break the ice as anything else but it also introduced poetry. We did look at the use of repetition by the poet so around that poem all we did was, as I said, use it as an icebreaker, introduce the literary technique of repetition and begin discussing it - basically the plot. Then we moved on to one called Reflection and it's done in a very interesting way. Although the notes that I am working from don't suggest it it really is like a concrete poem or a ??? type because it's a tiny poem in the middle of the page and there are reflections of the poem around the page. Well this helped catch the students' imagination which was useful. We looked here around the impressions that they got from this and we also thought the first task was to come up with synonyms for reflection. Now that was difficult. So I went back and revisited that the next day and we did a concept map around reflection to see. For them to come up with synonyms was hard it was almost too hard but they were able to come up with instances where there was reflection where you could see reflections such as in the water, in the ice, whatever, in the t.v. screen they could deal with that. Then we looked at the impression of the poem and read it through and again it's around identity and

teenagers or adolescents changing and trying to sort out who on earth they are. From there I moved to a series of other related poems except for the fact that they are under the topic of change of a person and that they 're contemporary. There wasn't much in common except that they all expressed feelings. So, the overall goal for that time was simply that they could use poetry as a way of expressing some feelings. So, that was sort of the jumping off point for them to choose a topic and see if they could through their poem express some feeling. Now some of them found that even to think about feelings was just too much. Can't do this - forget it and so I would re - route them through a topic. For example, one student decided he couldn't write about feelings but he could write about basketball and what I pointed out to them yet the following day was that even by taking a topic and writing a poem about it feelings come through. Some of them were saying - Oh. O.K. I guess I' ve done it. That was how they got there. Now that was where we got to this morning. They came with these rough drafts of poems they were to have some sort of feelings in, there some had gotten there vicariously but never mind it was done. Then today, I wanted to end it. I didn't want this to go on forever. So they were to do their good copy. Their good copy was to have one figure of speech that they had marked and identified and stated what it was. So, for example, if they used a simile they would highlight it in the column, they would write in the margin, underneath or somewhere " This is a simile." and what the comparison was. And I guess that I had omitted one thing and that is when I showed them the other variety of poems I had put them up on the overhead and we just read them aloud and that enabled us to

discuss some of the things they saw in those poems. This group was very quick to find figures of speech, for example. So it was easy then to make that one of the things that they would work into their own writing. So that was one of the criteria that it have one figure of speech - that was the minimum. The other criteria that emerged from this was to use concrete words. It worked wonderfully well because yesterday, I had simply said to them without even using that term try to find words that appeal to you for different senses as these other authors have done. That was fine they could handle that. Now then today I used the term concrete words. I would like to have at least two concrete words in there. Your goal would be to have five - one for each sense but if that doesn't work that's okay. I want at least two and these would be ones that you would highlight and again identify. It worked because it caused them to edit. Instead of editing becoming just proofreading it caused them to edit and I liked what I saw. Maybe not so much, and we talked about this in the class, I'm not sure that they liked their final poems but the thinking and the processing that occurred during the class I thought was good.

D.R. Could you explain more what it was you were looking for like you mentioned a couple of times that you were really happy with the process that happened, the processing that went on ...

Marvin What went on during that time - you mean what I'm trying to describe?

D.R. Yes, to know whether it's successful or not.

Marvin They were pondering whether they had the right word or they didn't have the right word what alternative words-could they come up with. The search for more precise or a variety of adjectives. I haven't always seen that in the classroom. Very often students write what they comes to their head and that's good enough if it's spelled correctly it's good enough. But this was a searching for a better word or more appropriate word or see if they could work in a line that carried alliteration or if they could put in a simile somewhere you know those kinds of things. It seemed to be active participation on their part. Those were the questions that they would come to me with those are the questions that they might ask of a partner that they were talking to. So, I assume those were the questions they were also asking themselves because I would go back and see that, oh, they had changed a line. That was usually what their explanation was.

D.R. Can you tell me more about the groupings - you mentioned the groupings, as well. I guess, I am wondering about whether they were large group, small group, individual or how you broke that down.

Marvin Individual. This was individual. Remember this is the beginning of the year so I am experimenting with these kids quite a bit yet. I did allow them, for a portion of yesterday, to use a learning buddy or partner. Today that came almost automatically and I didn't stop it because my goal would always be to get them to do the thinking. If that enabled them to do the thinking and it wasn't

inappropriate or too loud, I don't have a problem with that. So, I think some of them were probably wondering if this was okay but probably not on the other hand because we've established the level of noise that needs to be in the room when we've got thinking going on and that was there - it was quiet. But there was the odd time that they might turn to a partner to see if there could be another word that would rhyme with coming. They couldn't come up with one. I thought that that was fairly constructive.

D.R. You talked earlier about changing, you've changed a bit your practice from last year to this year.

Marvin Do you want the changes?

D.R. The changes and also maybe what was the motive for change or what kinds of things were you thinking about that sort of made you say "Hmm, I need to do something differently here"

Marvin Well there were a lot of things. Last year, I was just beginning the poetry unit when I changed positions and so it seemed to me that the poetry was an absolute disaster. The things that I had hoped to do with the kids didn't come off. I didn't have time to do any sort of revision to my planning I just felt very dissatisfied with it. I really didn't feel that they had either acquired an appreciation for poetry nor had gained very much like grown very much in terms of the study of poetry. So, ya, major disappointment, I guess, was the motivation like I had hoped to do "?????" with them. I thought that

that was a group that we would have been able to and tie that in with the grade 8 Social Studies. Then again, I wasn't able to even continue my experiment with that. So, anyway. The other thing is that I struggle with poetry to a degree myself. I'm not a creative writer. I struggle with the creative aspects so I have to work hard to enable those learning opportunities in the classroom and I guess all of these things ... Oh, plus I picked up last year just I guess to alleviate my own boredom probably more than anything else, right. I picked up an old Context text and did some stories out of it and in fact as the year went on I took more out of it because the students really responded positively to the material and it was new to me so it was fun. Some things didn't go but that was okay we'd just go onto the next thing. Now, I don't know what your experience has been - but mine has been that sometimes you get new material I remember when we got *Windows and Mirrors* because it was new and different and we were going to try it. The kids didn't like the stories and those books are still on some shelf somewhere. Right. Anyway, so putting all of this together, what I did last year was I contacted the representative of Nelson and got the new series of Contexts book for grade 8 and 9. It's beautiful because it not only has thematic units which I can I guess identify with - it's changes for grade 8 is the first unit and choices for grade 9 which both seem to be topical, very appropriate and relative too. But they are integrated units so there will be a short story and then some poems and then a play or whatever and it also incorporates all of the functional writing aspects which I like. So, it just seemed like a thing that I thought I'd try to see if I could do it. I think that it will work because for

example at the grade 8 lesson that I explained to you, which is actually was two lessons, two topics, that's it for poetry, Now, we'll move on to the short story which follows it and then I know another item that is coming up is letters to Dr. Mom or whatever you know that they would write. So, it's a variety of Language Arts techniques and so you never really get tired of one thing. Another thing that gave me feedback for the last few years, I've done a course evaluation with the students, had them write down things they liked - things didn't like. One of the responses from last year was too many short stories. I thought that's twisted a little bit but that was their feeling that's how they felt. We were doing short stories forever or that we did a lot of that kind of stuff. So, I thought, well, okay, time to get a bit more variety and maybe they won't feel that they are always doing short stories.

D.R. So, your poetry instruction this year will be of what nature you've described it as you've done poetry now and will poetry then come up again during the year? How do you see it this year?

Marvin In fact it will come up again further on in this unit. There are two more one that's called Change and I have to admit I don't remember what comes out of that and then one that's called After a Heated Argument and around that one you teach Haiku. We'll look at other models of Haiku and maybe write a little Haiku poem and then move onto the next thing. So, that you are not immersed for quite so long on a topic. It's a little bit more work because you have to constantly keep track of what are you supposed to be learning

with each topic. Whereas if you are in a genre unit, which is what I've always used before it's much easier to keep track of what the learnings are supposed to be, what's the progress, where you are supposed to be going.

D.R. So, now what you're saying is that it's going to be part of an integrated unit, thematically appropriate and integrate poetry into that rather than doing a separate genre unit. O.K. Good.

Marvin I can see, in fact I had to start this yesterday, the record keeping has to be there otherwise you will miss. I have to ensure that I teach all the literary techniques, for example, that are required for each grade level. I have to make sure that they are exposed to the variety of different poems that's expected for that age level. All of that has to be sort of ensured somehow along the way. I have to write that out.

D.R. What do you think the value for the students will be?

Marvin I'm not sure yet but I'm hoping that it would be almost the same as mine, less boredom. That they would hopefully respond from the variety. I think that the choice of poems and that was another problem that the poems that I was using was not probably all that good. I had trouble finding poems I liked because I don't always like poetry like I like a certain kind. I like Robert Service and so on and so I could get them quite excited about that but then when

that was over then what? So some of these that I am using are written by young people or they are at least on topics that they can identify. I am hoping that that will be positive.

D.R. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your poetry instruction?

Marvin I can't help but think that the fact that I've got French Immersion Language Arts has got to be a big factor here. I probably could have done this with the group I had last year but the group I had the year before no way - forget it. I wouldn't even have gotten the first two sentences out.

D.R. So the students make a difference?

Marvin Absolutely. I think that's why I wrote it at the bottom or tried to express in number #10. It's just so dependent on the interactive process in the classroom whether you're successful or not successful.

D.R. Good. Thank you.

## INTERVIEW # 3

D.R. Thank you Wade for agreeing to be interviewed. I'm really curious about some of the aspects that you wrote about in your survey. I was wondering if you could explain to me or describe for me what poetry instruction looks like in your class. You have agreed with some of the statements about having the teacher tell them how to read and experimenting and experiencing the reading. I guess I'm wondering if I was a student in your class what that might look like?

Wade O.K. I do the poetry as a unit in itself. I don't integrate it with other literature units. So, we study poetry as a separate unit. I tend to rely mainly on one source and I think that's probably we'll get to this later but that's maybe an area that I would like to look at. I tend to rely on one source book for most of my material that's perhaps out of convenience as much as anything else just because I have copies of it, the kids have copies of it. We look at a number of different poems, or a number of different types of poems and then I try to do some kind of a balance between just for reading for enjoyment and discussion and staying away from sort of the heavy analysis part but then we do look at others in much greater detail depending on the analytical parts of speech I'll ask the kids usually at that time to answer very specific questions on the poems and then we'll discuss those after. Sometimes we discuss them a little bit in advance, sometimes we read it in advance, sometimes we

don't, sometimes I let them tackle it on their own and then we'll have a discussion afterwards.

D.R. Can you talk to me in greater detail about what that might look like for kids, large group instruction with the whole class, small group, individual, how does that kind of work in your classroom?

Wade Pretty much large group instruction, quite, I would say teacher directed with discussion. Mostly it's in large group.

D.R. Is there any individual opportunities or are there opportunities for individual work as well and what might that look like?

Wade Some of it, mostly because I do tie in a writing project with the poetry so I would say that they get an appetite for ??

D.R. And the writing project is related to writing poetry?

Wade Writing poetry where they - again there's some guidelines to this - very specific types of poems and different things. We tried ballads for the first time last year because I tried to tie it into our Middle Ages unit in Social Studies which we do at the same time. We talked about ballads there and then they can add. There's sort of a minimum requirement where it's fairly specific and then they can take it off in any direction that they want where certainly within the framework they can do more but it's up to them to do other types as well.

D.R. I'm also interested in the aspect of change. You've highlighted here [in the survey] that you have done some thinking about changing the way you teach poetry. I guess I'm wondering what you might do to change or what some of changes are that you may be considering at this point in time?

Wade There's maybe a couple of areas. I think one way is maybe providing them with more sources to look at for poetry. I used to use more at one time, I'm not sure why I got away from it. I used to bring in a number of books that we can look through and find some poetry that they like as well. I tend to do poetry toward or after Spring Break sometimes I just tend to pull back a little bit and I think that perhaps I'm in a bit of a rut myself. It makes it more difficult teaching like that with more individual or small group work.

D.R. What kinds of things might be helpful to making that change happen?

Wade Probably discussions with colleagues and these people who have tried other methods and what works and what didn't work and how did they organize it. Like myself as far as the individual responder if I feel more comfortable with how things are organized and I find out how it works the best way.

D.R. So, if you were to talk with a colleague about how that strategy might work and do some dialogue about that in terms of organization that might encourage you to try that method?

Wade I think so. I think that's the way - we really don't certainly necessarily do that but we're not provided I don't think with enough time to do that as frequently as we should. I think everybody just gets caught up with one thing or another.

D.R. You also mentioned here [in the survey] professional reading, I'm wondering what that might look like?

Wade I had quite a good little book about poetry and I lent it to someone and I never got it back [and it wasn't you Debbie]

D.R. [Oh Phew! I was thinking about that book!]

Wade Could maybe just look at some materials, suggested methods that teachers can use.

D.R. Is there anything else, at this point, that you would like to add about your poetry instruction?

Wade No, I don't think so.

D.R. Thank you.

## INTERVIEW # 4

D.R. Thank you Robert for agreeing to be interviewed. From your survey the part that I am really interested in learning more about is when you responded to strongly agreeing with students experiencing the reading and interpretation of the poem as lead by the teacher. I'm wondering if you could describe for me what that might look like in your class.

Robert Um, well partly it depends on the class and how strong they are but I think especially at the beginning of the poetry unit I like to do a lot of teacher directed stuff rather than have them figure it out blindly on their own. So, I do about a poem about seven or eight poems together. So, I give them the poem and then I read through it and then I just question them and direct them by the questioning. What do you think this means? Can you find this? Can you find an example of this in the poem? Can you show me some place in the poem where this happens? It is very much teacher directed and very much to the whole group and that only happens - I do that at the beginning so that I can model for them how you might present a poem to the class. As the first two or three are very much directed by me and then after that the kids start to take more ownership for them because they' ll see the direction that I am going in and they can figure it out for themselves. Like for example, I might at the very beginning if I was doing something like figurative language - after we' ve gone - I always try to get the meaning of the poem first so

we would do the meaning of the poem and What do you think it's about? and What do you think happens in the poem? and How do you know that that happens? What words told you that that happens? that kind of thing. Once we got the meaning of the poem then I like to do individual images. What is this image? What is that image? and then we talk about figurative language a little bit. So, say the first time through I might say Can any of you find the simile? Then we would find the similes and we would discuss what was compared. Whereas by the second or third poem all I would have to say to them is would be Are there any examples of figurative language? and then they can find the figurative language. I always do that last because I like to downplay that because I don't think that it's that important. I mean it's important but I don't want the kids to always think well that's what poetry is all about is these six figures of speech these six examples of figurative language and that's all there is. Because to me it's not that it's very much more about charm, more imagery and then part of the reason I do that teacher directed is because I always have the kids teach a poem to the class and they don't just present it they have to teach it and in order to teach it they have to come up with their own questions. How would they question the class to get the meaning out of the poem the way that I have done and that's their major oral assignment in poetry is they have to teach a poem to the class. So, I always say to them well, remember when we did this poem together What kinds of questions did I ask? So that if I haven't modelled that then they can't really do it for themselves. So that's why the emphasis and the focus is on that. That's only at the beginning of the year and then after that those

first six or so poems that we all do together after that they are on their own and then they do group work and their individual work.

D.R. Can you describe for me a little bit what that group work might look like and what individual work might look like?

Robert O.K. well after we've done the teacher directed poems and they might do some written work on that just a little bit. There's one major assignment that they do on the Highwayman because I love The Highwayman. They do artwork on that and they rewrite the last two stanzas and change the ending and that kind of thing. Then when we've got to there then I feel like they have kind of got their feet on the ground about what and how to attack a poem how to get at it. And then after that I give them a group assignment where they have - there might be four or five groups in the room and each of them gets a different poem and they work together to answer questions or to come up with a presentation and then they present their poem to the class. None of the other kids in the class have seen the poem before so it's basically just another way to read more poems. My goal in poetry is lots of poetry - tons of it. When they are finished - by the time that they have got their poetry book together they have ten poems that they have chosen, three that they have written, six that we've done as a class, one that they have done as a group and twenty - five other poems that kids have taught to them. So their anthology is fat we have well over fifty poems usually or around thirty to fifty poems depends on how many they have collected in their poetry

booklet by the time they've finished and they can pretty much tell you why they chose it, what they thought it was about, and what appealed to them in the poem and they can pick out figurative language and then they write their own poems too. We do a fair amount of that. We do a lot of what I call formula poems you know limericks, and haikus, and all those kinds of things we do those for warm-ups, verb, adjective models, synonyms poems all those kinds of poems and then they write their own poems after that. So that all goes along the same line. Those also go in their poetry booklet so by the time that they are finished their poetry booklet is a real, really nice reflection of what they have learned in poetry. There's some testing in there, too. I give them one test that we have them do it together and then they'll have a sight poem test at the end.

D.R. How do the students respond to the poetry unit?

Robert Oh they love it. I'd say 90% of them really like it because it's such a big scope they can always find a poem that they like or two or three that they really like and it gets them talking and it's all oral. The first part especially is very much oral. They don't do any writing until they get into their booklet which is usually about two weeks into the unit before that it's all oral, it's all discussion, presentation that kind of thing they don't write very much at all.

D.R. Have you ever given some thought to changing how you do poetry?

Robert Nope not much cause it works for me. The only thing I would do to change it is that I'm always looking for new poems so it's not. I like the format that I have. I really like it because it works and things that I'd do differently is that every year there are different poems because I don't use the same poems over and over again. I like to look for new poetry all the time. The other thing that I've done too is include more song lyrics. They seem to see those as poetry, I don't always see it as poetry, but they do. I've incorporated a lot more artwork because I have them illustrate their poems and bring that part into it too. I've also done more the other that I've changed too is more biography on poets so when they teach their poem to the class, for example, they are expected to do a little biography on the poet, as well. So they have to do some research. Find out about the guy, get a picture, you know that kind of thing. The same you might use actually if you were teaching grammar.

D.R. How did you go about making those changes as you talked about making a number of changes ?

Robert Oh, I don't know. It just struck me that I should. For example, when we were doing - a couple of the kids did a Robert Frost poem and they wanted to find out about Robert Frost. So, I had a Robert Frost book and I said well you know you could do a little biography on this. Well that's a good idea O.K. so then I suggested that to everybody and if they could find it fine and if they can't fine it doesn't matter that much but it's also - it's usually interesting to the kids to find out what kind of a person wrote that poem and in

terms of the other stuff. I don't know I don't like teaching the same thing year after year, the same poems year after year.-There are some that I wouldn't change. I'll always do The Highwayman because it's a great poem. I'll always do The Road not Taken. I'll always do Whales. I'll always do certain ones. Certain ones, I'll always do. But other ones I've thrown out over time because after a while they seem kind of tired, to me kind of hacky and I also I think it expresses - you have to reflect the society what society is concerned with. I like to find poems to do that and these are often the poems I choose. Also kids bring in poetry books all the time. I mean they always bring them in from home so then you have great sources to choose from.

D.R. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your poetry instruction that you haven't mentioned?

Robert No just that it's a favorite of mine.

D.R. Thank you.

## INTERVIEW # 5

D.R. Thank you very much for allowing me to interview you. One of the things that I am most curious about is your response to question # 4 about how do students read and interpret poetry best. What I'm wondering about is what kinds or types of activities occur in your class around poetry and if you could describe to me what a typical poetry lesson or unit might be like.

Marj Good question. I don't know if there is typical. I think that poetry tends to change quite a bit based on the kids, based probably on my reading on what kind of poem they might be interested in, based on the reading that I've done recently these things all kind of tend to interact. I think for me, my goal isn't to have the kids understand the poem as somebody else would understand it but to have them understand it in a way that makes sense to them which doesn't give them complete free license to say this is what the poem is about they have to be able to support it based on what they read in the poem. But, it's not up to me as the teacher to tell them that a poem means this, and if they don't necessarily get that, at least not at this point in time, they can read it and keep reading poetry. I guess just my own biases too is not to get into interpretation and as I say gets quite tricky unless we have Milton or Shakespeare sitting on the desk beside us unless we have first hand information we can't be sure that the interpretation that's being offered is really what they meant anyway. So much of it is academic. So say that somebody at some point chooses to study

these poems and knows them far better than I do as a teacher and that they politely know as a group and so they can tell somebody but in the end unless they've taught directly with Shakespeare they don't have any idea and so I think kids need to own what the poem says to them but in order to make them read carefully I think they need to understand what they read and need to be able to support what they're saying this why this may be this way because so much is association and they may associate a particular passage or phrase or word with something completely outside our experience and it changes the meaning of the poem for them but it makes it dramatically more important to them and we have to be as teachers to be able to understand that. I really believe that the lesson centres around now here's a poem. What do you think? Did you like it? You're free to like it. Do you dislike it? You're free to dislike it. You don't have to like it because I'm your teacher. Did you like it or dislike it? How do you feel about it? Why do you feel that way? Is it valuable? Did you like the poem or is it one that goes by in passing? What does it say to you? So I ask them to that and I hold them fairly tightly to examine themselves before I share with them my biases. Until they know what they think it's hard for them to go into a group. I tend to have them look at the poem themselves. We may use different strategies: plus, minus, interesting. We may problem solve and say: O.K. What do I know in here? What don't I know? What troubles me? What do I want to know? because it seems to be the key. Then I bring them together in groups, then they do a group read I use a lot of Dias I probably don't use it the way he would like me to use it all the time because I tend to do some things he wouldn't have done. I

ask them to share it, to read it, to listen to it and then I ask them to talk about what they each thought. Then I ask them to share problems and often what I find is that student A had a problem but student B can tell A what he thinks the answer is to that so that increases our understanding. Usually by the end we're left with common group problems and then they try to problem solve around those. Then I usually ask them to come to some kind of consensus, around as a group, what they think they got out of this and then we seek consensus on whether or not they liked it or they didn't or whether we should keep it or whether it's relevant. So that's essentially the process again as I say it varies I use a lot of modelling so that they know what's going on and then we write.

D.R. One of the areas that I'm interested in here is that on f) by strategy instruction you've indicated on the survey that you strongly agree with that and that that seems to be the way that works best with the students. Is that the process that you just described?

Marj To some extent. I think kids need to - somebody to focus them seriously on it. It's not okay just to treat it idly. I want them to pay attention to it. It's okay in the end to decide that they don't like it - it has no value and they don't ever want to see it again. That's a choice that they make. Initially so much of what they do is value judgment. Once they get inside it they get kind of aha this isn't too bad this has got some possibilities that I never saw. They often get that from the rest when they get together in groups. They have to I

think that they have to have some strategy to read it in order to give them a purpose to read. You have to give them some questions that they can ask themselves. They have to know how to look inside their own heads so they can hear what's going off in there so that they know - they pay attention to what they know or don't know. I think they have to be required to think. To simply hand them a poem and say read it what does it say? I mean that's okay you can get some good information from them but I think that you want to compel them to look at it a little bit more carefully. I also tell them that they are not going to like some of what they read, they're going to like some of what they read so that they don't go in to it assuming that every piece of poetry is the one that's an incredible one to learn some kind of poetry is not.

D.R. Is there some student selection that might be built into the process that you use with students as to the choice of poem?

Marj . It depends on how much we're doing and that tends to vary from year to year. Often I'll have the students bring in their own poems from other years or I'll have them bring in poems that they thought were really good or I'll bring in a whole pile of books that they can read and find poems. But I try and get them to - the invitation is to go and bring in something that they have and if I can carry the process through which I can't always do every year but there have been years where the students have simply done all of the teaching so they bring in the poem, they present it to the class. They conduct essentially the same set of exercises and then they talk

about the poem end to end. So they have a good contrast as to what the kids got out of it. I think it's helpful for them to see - Gee, I saw a completely different layer. Boy somebody actually interpreted it . Different kids get different reports. Some kids really like it when somebody interprets their poem just as they thought it was. And other kids liked it because it kind of expands their poem and their set of understandings about the possibilities of the poem and includes a whole set of other things -- their energy level.

D.R. Have you ever given some thought to changing what you do with poetry?

Marj I think I change every year to some extent. I could do poetry for a long period of time because it comes easily to me and I find that it's an area that the kids really enjoy. I often leave it till the end because it'll happen. It'll happen. So, I'd like to spend more time on it but sometimes it's hard to justify that in terms of other skills. We get the whole writers in the schools thing and we really need to bring a series of poets in and have them talk about writing. It would be nice to have some first hand or on hands information. I guess the group of kids and the teachers I'm working with, depends on the building environment too to some degree. Change - ya I think we've got to do change. The same poem year after year is deadly - deadly to me as the teacher and probably deadly to the kids.

D.R. What helps you make those changes?

Marj I think the biggest thing I do every year is I ask the kids what was O.K. and which poems they liked. So, I tend to use some of the stuff the kids say and that was really good. So, I have a collection of stuff that I know kids have reacted to really well. So, I let my change occurs if I read a poem and kids don't like it or it doesn't seem to work then I'll throw it out so that kind of changes it to some extent. The kids themselves, their energy level, their ability to work together as opposed - -to as individuals, their competitiveness, the colleagues I'm working with whether they're into poetry, reading it and very supportive of it, the building - what's available - the resources available each year and we tend to get a different staff person they're always throwing out good ideas.

DR Is there anything in particular that you think might help you make changes if you were going to make changes in your poetry curriculum. You talked about a number of things like the building that you might be in the particular resources or the different colleagues you work with.

Marj I dunno. That's a really hard question. I tend to respond really well to people that I perceive as being really knowledgeable so that if I encountered somebody who impressed me and was using poetry and presenting poetry in a way that I saw would allow me to do the job better then clearly I'd use that method and there's been a number of people along the way. There has been a number of books that have come out that you can use that add to your repertoire like Dias who has had a fairly large impact on poetry in general. I dunno, about

change, I think because it's not a locked in thing change doesn't have any walls so I see it as evolving in order to make these changes somebody would have to come in and say your poetry program is this and we want you to change it to that and I'd have to make a decision if I wanted to go from this to that. I don't know whether I would. The other thing that I do now more than I did originally is share my own work. The reason I do that is not because I think I write particularly well but because then I can talk about interpretation. Some kids will go through the poem and they'll say this is what it means and I'll say no it isn't and I can tell you after because I wrote it but you know what it doesn't matter because I really like what you said about it. If you got that out of it then I think that's really helpful and that's great. So, it really doesn't matter. But I think it's good for them so they can ask. The other thing is that it models for them that you're writing poetry and that you are prepared to share it. It's a big risk to share. You risk having people not like your work which is frustrating, but then we ask kids to do that every day. So, for me that's a piece of the program.

D.R. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your poetry program or how you instruct poetry in your classroom that you haven't mentioned up until now?

Marj I think that the only thing is that I think is both a weakness and a strength and that is that we tend to go with what you like in poetry to start with. That's your kind of approach to life. I think that you have to go with that as a strength I think it's very hard to teach

something you don't like and be really disciplined about it. You could probably ask a teacher to teach something that they don't like it somebody asked me to teach music I could teach jazz but I wouldn't want to teach opera too much because I don't like it but I think if I was going to be true to music I'd have to touch it in some way. In terms of change or I think somewhere somehow you need to be make sure you' re being fairly eclectic in what you' re looking for. I think we all are subject to the weakness of collapsing in and it seems to be something that we all need to work at with some compulsion. nobody said you had to touch this and that and that maybe you need to know where you are going that's paying attention to what you're good at and what you like and just knowing that there's both a strength and a weakness in that.

D.R. Thank you Marj.

#### INTERVIEW # 6

D.R. Sally, thank you for agreeing to be part of the interview process, I really appreciate it. I am curious especially about your poetry component in your Language Arts course. Could you tell me a little bit about what role poetry has in your Language Arts program.

Sally Up until now just being an emerging grade 6 teacher I haven't really had a chance to implement any poetry to this time at all. So, this is something I'm really looking at for 95 - 96. It's

something that I would think maybe after the new year, a mini - unit in poetry for the students benefit but also for mine too.- I think it's definitely a positive thing that they would enjoy.

D.R. Have you given any consideration as to how you might go about doing that poetry unit and instruction with the students?

Sally I've given it a little bit of thought. So, just in two ways, one is the appropriateness of the material. So I would really like to hook them on poetry. So firstly you would have to have a really attractive kind of a quality to it. The thing would sort of have a very positive enthusiastic response to it. Secondly, I would like to see it be something that is very sort of non threatening and something that they would really get a strong sense of success in. So initially then I've only really thought about it in those two ways I haven't even got any material. I haven't really thought about the presentation of the material at all so I'm just really kind of at the planning stage.

D.R. Have you that about that change, Sally, in terms of your thinking about considering the poetry in your Language Arts program?

Sally They have a pretty well rounded strong Language Arts program right now and I have a gap in my timetable that I have personally designed to give them something that they would find attractive. So,

I have a little wee window that opens up every cycle. I kind of have a positive attitude towards it myself by doing something- that I did when I was in school not in the way that we did it but I think I seriousness that I recall. Now I envision doing something like a Robert Service that they can kind of relate to and maybe using it as a kind of spin off into my Social Studies program which is in grade 6 is very sort of emerging Canada with the trade routes and something like so that's very sort of Robert Service type of thing.

D.R. So at this time you are thinking of integrating poetry into your Social Studies program?

Sally Ya, absolutely.

D.R. So doing it thematically?

Sally Ya something like that.

D.R. What might help you go about that change in doing that kind of instruction in your classroom?

Sally I'd like to see what's out there. So, my real interest right now is trying to sort of accumulate and gather information, and see what other people are doing and see what's recommended for the grade 6 program. So, I am really hoping to use a lot of our librarian as a resource person to fall back on. I've kind of

mentioned that to her as well. She's excellent and really wants to sort of help out in that sense. That's Lynn dell.

D.R. Is there any interest that your students have mentioned as an interest in poetry or wanting to do some poetry?

Sally I don't think that poetry is of interest at all just from sort of some scattered conversations I've had. I don't think that it's going to show up as an interest in poetry at all.

D.R. Is there anything else that you would like to add about poetry?

Sally Ya, I'd really like to get some books on poetry just to sort of see what's available and you know how there's teacher packages that are developed on poetry. I'd just love to get my hands on something like that. Now, I mean I don't have any budget for it but I've got a budget to photostat and duplicate so if there's anything available like that I'd love to take a look at it.

D.R. Maybe I could help you out with that.

Sally That would be great! Particularly if it's grade 6 and it relates to anything that's sort of outdoors or Robert Service or it relates thematically to the Social Studies with the Natives, and the trade routes, and colonialism, or expanding Canada that whole idea.

D.R. Thank you Sally.

## INTERVIEW # 7

D.R. Thank you for offering to be interviewed Dillion . I really appreciate it. What I'm interested in is in your survey you indicated that the way that you would have students read and interpret poetry is that you think students read and interpret poetry best is by reading and discussing and interpreting the poem in small groups. I am wondering what that might look like in practice in your classroom and if you could describe for me what a poetry lesson or what your poetry unit was like.

Dillion The poetry unit I did was mainly a lot of it teacher centred where the teacher would take a poem they had and go through it line by line until the students had no problem with that poem and then go through it line by line discussing what each line meant what they thought the point of the poem was, what was the author was trying to get across and also talk about the language of the poem whether it was a simile or a metaphor and going through that information. Then spend some time having students work on their own then interpreting the poem as well after I had them go through it a number of times with me with different styles of poems and then have them do the same thing on their own and I also had them then pick a poem that they had to teach to the class using the same format basically that I had. So, they did really what I had done in class and the last thing I had them do was to do a poetry anthology where they collected poems that they liked and put them into different sections so they had to have poems that represented different parts of poetry so one of them might be a serious or a

humorous or a narrative poem, a descriptive poem. They also had to tell me very briefly what the poem was about and why they picked the poem and that was about it. Then we finished with a poetry exam or poetry test that just mainly looked at definitions and terminology and also a poem that they again had to answer some questions like could they interpret what the poem was about.

D.R. So then you did a lot of large group instruction to start off with with teacher direction and then did they do some small group work?

Dillion Only in the sense when they worked on their own poems they often worked with a pair or a few other people to talk about their poem. And I did have them, I believe, I did have them work on a poem in a group one time and as a group they discussed the poem to try to come up with what the poem was about in a small group.

D.R. And then they worked individually, what did that individual work look like? They worked on individual anthologies and then they worked?

Dillion Basically the anthology would have been the time that they worked alone and then that's what it was it was just mainly collecting poems and they might have shared with one another just a

poem that they enjoyed or one that they thought was interesting but it was pretty much individual work.

D.R. Could you tell me a little bit more about the goals of poetry in your Language Arts program what were you looking at in terms of having the students exposed to poetry and sort of what you were hoping to get there.

Dillion I guess to have an understanding and an appreciation of poetry that it's a different form of literary language that they could appreciate and understand and see it for its value rather than just a way of pronouncing things that its more complex but in itself they could appreciate the reason why the author or the poet rather would have used that sort of language and just to help them take the language and make sense of it. Those were my goals.

D.R. As you were looking at your poetry program I also noticed that you talked about making some changes in the way that you taught poetry, could you talk a little bit about what those changes might look like?

Dillion I would do it quite a bit different. I wouldn't do a poetry unit. I would do poetry throughout. I'd do it much more theme based. So, when we had done grammar I would have used a lot of the poetry on grammar and just brought in things such as cinquains and poems that used adjective poems or verb poems. So, we'd talk about here's a noun let's use the noun to create the poem that deals with nouns or descriptive poems or whatever. So, I would have used it

more in those senses rather than. I had done that with another unit with them. It was so different than 5 line poems. It seemed sort of disjointed like the kids would do them but with no real rhyme or reason for doing them. Also, when we were doing this big unit there were times when descriptive writing would have been when we would talk about descriptive writing well it would have been a perfect time to have brought in poetry. Let's look at how poems are so descriptive and how it is descriptive. Let's write some descriptive poems. We had done a unit on the senses. Again a perfect time to have brought in poetry. Using your senses in the poem either writing about them or just a poem that used the different senses. So, I would have used it more throughout and at the same time talked about or even when we were analyzing the story or looking at a story to have brought in a poem that might have fit in with that and talked about the poem at that point. That's what I meant by theme based.

D.R. What do you think helped you come to that realization that those were the changes that you would like to make?

Dillion Probably because of the students. They were interested at first and they seemed poetry was different but I found that they lost interest very quickly. They really liked the anthology. They enjoyed finding their own poems but in terms of them actually interpreting the poems that wasn't a skill that I think they acquired the way that we had done it and just because it became too monotonous to day after day even though they were different poems

and they were very different in their styles and their content it was still the same thing. It was still me telling them about a poem instead of them picking poems throughout the year and I think if they had maybe had a chance to let's look at this poem and brought it in it would have been more meaningful than just independent. Just sort of one class at a time for a poem or an assignment and maybe add a story.

D.R. More of an integrated approach is what you are looking at.

Dillion Yes.

D.R. What do you think might be more helpful to help you make those changes in your Language Arts class?

Dillion For me, just because I'm still new to Language Arts, it would help to and I know this information is out there. To have when I do a short story to have knowledge of poems that do relate to the short story. So, if it was a story on conflict instead of me having to go and look through poetry books finding poems on conflict to have some resource that would say here are some poems that would reinforce this idea of conflict and a variety of poems that would do that. That sort of thing. Also just basically, for me, it's just basic information, things like the language of poems because there are a lot of things about the mechanics of poetry that I'm not aware of. I

find it difficult to find texts that are simple enough to say this is a metaphor because.

D.R. Do you think that's important information for students to have?

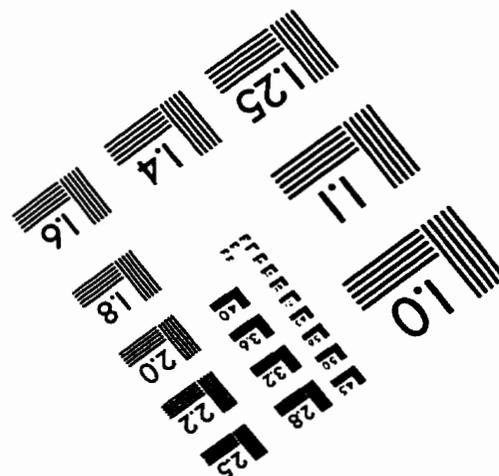
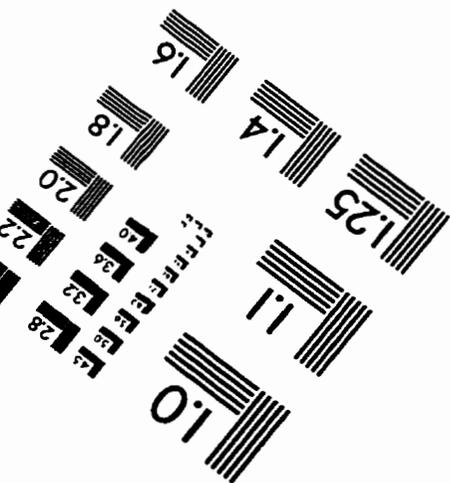
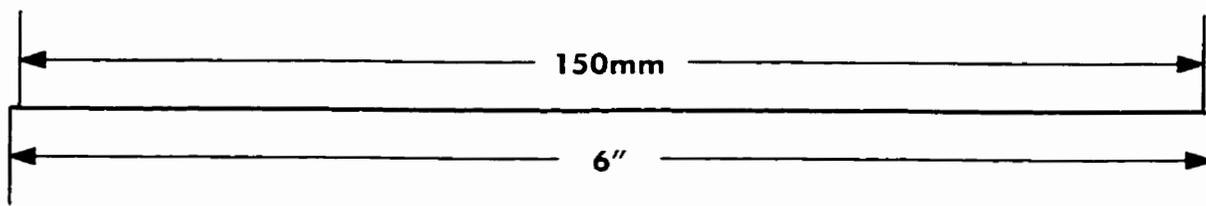
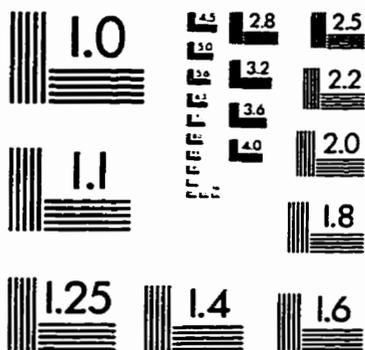
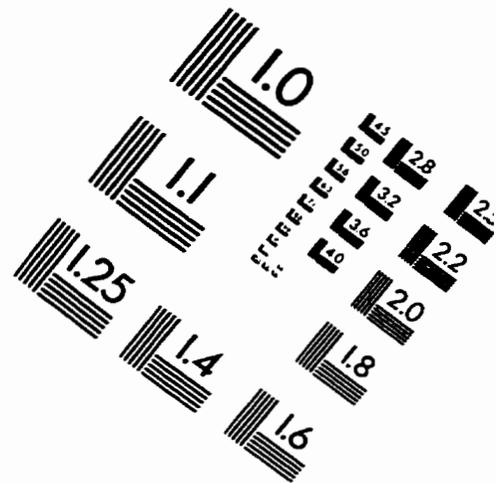
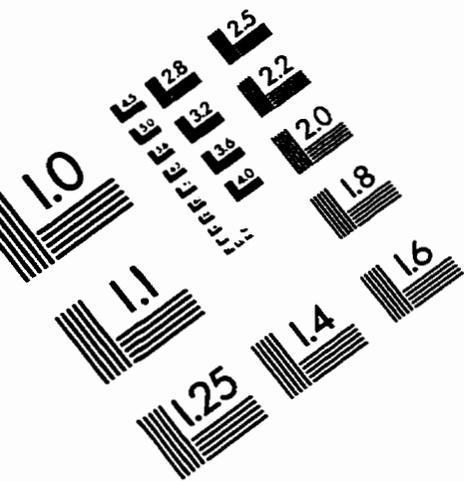
Dillion I think it is. They ask you or the teacher. I found a lot of times I was kind of - I was picking poems that I could already understand and found that if it were a more difficult poem or some of the poems that they picked I'm not sure I really have the background to say this is this and this is why or this is what I think the author is trying to say or the poet is trying to say for these reasons. I could guess at it just like they could.

D.R. To actually say definitively this is what. Is there anything else that you would like to add about poetry instruction or things that we haven't covered?

Dillion No.

D.R. Thank you.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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